# MUSICAL COURIER

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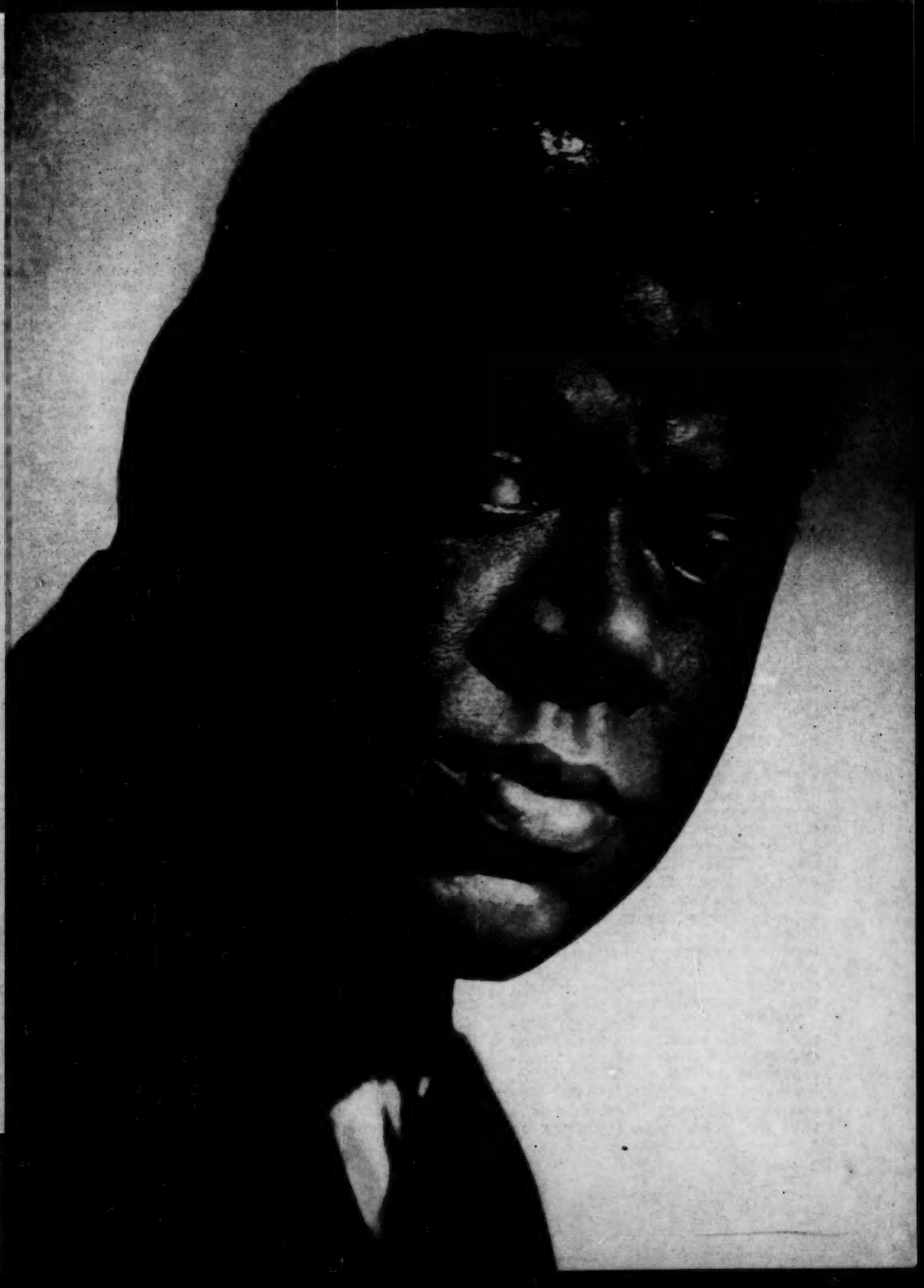
**"WARFIELD'S VOICE IS HIS VISA"**



**WILLIAM WARFIELD**

# WARFIELD'S VOICE IS HIS VISA

*State Department plans to have its "musical ambassador" carry the life-lines of American culture to distant foreign lands for the fourth time.*

**By GID WALDROP**

THE voice of America's distinguished baritone William Warfield will be heard, during the first ten weeks of 1958, by thousands of Asiatics in their own Far Eastern countries. The busy artist will represent us once more as a cultural emissary of the State Department, to entertain and uplift people far from our shores. His concerts will take place in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Java, Cambodia, Siam, Viet Nam, Laos, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. Andre Mertens, Vice President of Columbia Artists Mgt., who arranges Warfield's tours in this part of the world, has cooperated with the artist's personal manager, Larney Goodkind, by re-casting the singer's 1957-58 itinerary at home in order to allow sufficient time for the Far Eastern tour. Goodkind is working out the tour itinerary with Robert Schnitzer, General Manager of the International Exchange Program of ANTA, who selects the most representative artists for these special missions of the State Department.

Warfield made his first such journey in 1952 when, as star of *Porgy and Bess*, he introduced this American opera to the people of Vienna, Berlin, and London (its first performances abroad). Then, as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra on its first tour of Europe, he made his second trip for the State Department in 1955. The artist's third such undertaking, for four months, ending last December, took Warfield through the heart of Africa, the Near East, and Western Europe. Many of the African countries had never before heard a formal concert nor been visited by a concert artist. The success of this phase of the tour particularly was immediate and far-reaching. Its impact on our foreign relations and inspiration for the natives who heard Warfield are a milestone in Africa that will be remembered for decades. Already, Schnitzer has arranged for other fine American artists to follow the trail so effectively blazed by Warfield. Purely political benefits cannot properly be appraised here but, it is felt, even the recent mission of Vice President Nixon, visiting some of the countries where Warfield appeared, was warmly advanced by the singer's compelling art and personality.

The actual "booking" of this tour along an uncharted course proved a difficult, highly complex task. The idea seemed so strange in many of the countries approached that Goodkind met with considerable resistance from some, apprehension or just plain apathy from others. Naturally, none of these doubts came from the natives, for whose benefit the tour was planned, and who evidenced such unbounded enthusiasm and inspiration once the removal of obstacles resulted in their actually hearing Warfield. The tour began in Liberia and ended in Ethopia, the only two (at the time) independent African nations, and those between were the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, the Belgian Congo, Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Kenya, and Uganda. For the entire tour Otto Herz, the artist's pianist for many years, accompanied Warfield everywhere. After Africa there followed Lebanon, Israel, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Norway, and England — 21 countries in 17 weeks.

After serious consideration of the problems involved in programming for different nationalities, races, degrees of enlightenment, Warfield decided to take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to test his theory that the finest classical music would serve as well as the lighter, more obvious sort to introduce Western music to these thousands of untrained, unsophisticated ears. Since the prime purpose of this tour was that he be heard by natives, the results couldn't have been more successful. The artists were amazed to find that the same songs that were enthusiastically received in Vienna and Berlin enjoyed the same reactions in Africa and the Near East, though undoubtedly for different reasons. Some of the composers who fared particularly well in remote areas were Monteverdi, Lully, Ravel, Loewe, and Schubert. The Africans' manner of reacting often differed from ours in the Western world. Unable to contain their joy at times while songs were still being sung, they would break into applause, foot-stomping, and even shouts (approximating our "bravos"). The most popular number everywhere he sang in Africa was Ravel's setting of the Kaddisch.

Since the conclusion of this tour at the end of 1956 Warfield has chalked up other successes—in recitals across the country, in appearances under Bruno Walter with the Chicago Symphony (Brahms' Requiem), and with the New York Philharmonic under Leonard Bernstein as soloist in Handel's *Messiah*. The Columbia Recording of the latter work is still to be released. Warfield's most recent release for Columbia is his performance in the Mozart Requiem with the New York Philharmonic led by Bruno Walter. Next season his American tour is scheduled for October, November, December, and April, with the trip to the Far East between the latter two months. In June 1958 he will commence his second tour of Australia, including 20 recitals and 15 orchestral appearances. After a month's rest at home he will leave in early fall of the same year for another tour of Western Europe.

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Seventy-seventh Year
March 15, 1957

# nothing but

### Empire State Music Festival Launches Emergency Appeal

An emergency appeal for $100,000 to enable the Empire State Music Festival at Ellenville, New York to continue this summer was launched on Mar. 1 at 11 p.m. by Mike Wallace, Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Festival, on his "Night Beat" program over WABD-TV (Channel 5). Joining with Mr. Wallace to institute this appeal was Mr. Basil Rathbone, who starred in the Festival's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* last year.

The Empire State Music Festival was founded in 1955 and won immediate national and international recognition as a top summer musical undertaking. Again, in 1956, its second season was hailed unanimously as a major national and artistic cultural event. Plans for the coming year indicate that this third annual Festival will be more brilliant and creative than ever—if funds are available to permit its opening on July 4th in Ellenville, N. Y. for its five-week season.

Mr. Wallace urged the public to respond generously and quickly to the emergency appeal for funds by saying, "This great cultural activity must not be allowed to die. The importance of the Empire State Music Festival to the people of New York and, indeed, to music lovers throughout the country and the world, can not be overestimated. Last year, in addition to a full and varied program, the Festival offered the American premieres of two musical masterpieces: the dance-music composition by Villa-Lobos and Jose Limon based on Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones" which was commissioned by the Festival; and Carl Orff's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" with Basil Rathbone and Red Buttons, and with Leopold Stokowski conducting the Symphony of the Air. These brilliant productions, and the others on the Festival's 1956 program, were attended by 64,525 people. One evening's count of license plates in the Festival's parking area showed that these cars represented 37 states, plus Canada and Alaska.

Mr. Wallace suggested that contributions, which are tax deductible, be sent directly to him at the offices of the Empire State Music Festival at 36 West 44th Street, New York City.

### Madeira Is First American Carmen at Aix Festival

Jean Madeira, contralto of the Metropolitan Opera, will be singing the title role in the new production of Bizet's *Carmen* on July 13, 17, and 23 in Aix-en-Provence, France. This is the first time that an American is singing the part of Carmen in Aix-en-Provence. All other members of the cast are French.

Previous to her engagement in Aix-en-Provence Jean Madeira will sing the part of Fricka in Wagner's *Die Walkuere* on April 2 at the Vienna State Opera House, Herbert von Karajan conducting. She will return to the U.S. on April 3 to rejoin the Metropolitan Opera. On June 18 she will sing the role of Carmen at the Vienna Festival.

LUBEN VICHEY *(seated), President of National Artists Corp., signs management contracts with (l to r) bass-baritone* KURT BOEHME, *dramatic sopranos* MARTHA MOEDL *and* MARIANNE SCHECH, *and tenor* WOLFGANG WINDGASSEN.

### G. Ricordi Commissions Opera From Gail Kubik

G. Ricordi & Co. announces that, in line with its policy of encouraging the composition of operas by prominent American composers, it has commissioned a three-act opera from Gail Kubik. They have just published Mr. Kubik's Symphony Concertante, which received the Pulitzer Prize in 1952, and will publish both the composer's Second Symphony (commissioned by the Louisville Symphony Orchestra) and his new Third Symphony.

The Overture and First Choral Suite from the Kubik-Jessamyn West folk opera *A Mirror for the Sky*, have also just been published by Ricordi.

The First Choral Suite is being featured by the Roger Wagner Chorale in their current nationwide tour, which includes 60 concerts in leading cities of the U. S. Mr. Kubik's "Thunderbolt" Overture will be performed next month at the Latin American Music Festival in Caracas under Jascha Horenstein.

### New Orleans Symphony Plans "Music Cruise"

Two unique "Pop" concerts will be given aboard a five-deck paddle wheel steamer April 9 and 16 by Conductor Alexander Hilsberg and the New Orleans Symphony.

Jack Dailey, symphony manager, has announced that the ballroom of the Mississippi River steamer will be converted into a concert hall with the entire orchestra of 85 placed at one end.

Sixteen hundred comfortable, unreserved seats will face the orchestra and the music will be piped over a loudspeaker system for passengers who might wish to sightsee from upper decks. The orchestra will play for most of the river trip.

Maestro Hilsberg will offer programs exclusively of the light popular type. It is hoped that the Music Cruise will become a regular orchestra event in coming seasons.

### Bethlehem Bach Festival

The Bach Festival at Bethlehem, Pa., will be held on May 9-11 and May 17-18. The 200-voice choir, under the direction of Ifor Jones, will perform the Mass in B Minor, Magnificat, and several Cantatas. The orchestra is made up of first-chair players from leading symphony orchestras of the country. Vernon deTar will preside at the organ console. Soloists will be Adele Addison, soprano; Eunice Alberts, contralto; John McCollum, tenor; and Donald Gramm, bass. This

# the news

will be Mr. Gramm's Bethlehem Bach Festival debut. The other soloists have all appeared at the Festival before.

### Brenda Lewis Stars in Viennese *Annie Get Your Gun*

Pennsylvania-born Brenda Lewis, for many years leading soprano of the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, opened in *Annie Get Your Gun* at the Volksoper, Vienna, on Feb. 26. Producer and translator of the musical

is Dr. Marcel Prawy, an American citizen who is now employed as Executive Producer of the state-owned Opera House, Volksoper, in Vienna.

This will be the first German language performance of *Annie Get Your Gun* and the first time in the history of musical comedy in Vienna that a performance will take place on a legitimate opera stage. There will be famous Wagnerian singers posing as cowboys and Indians around the star, Brenda Lewis; Buffalo Bill walking on the streets of Vienna; Viennese ballet dancers made up as Indians, etc.

Brenda Lewis learned the German translation of *Annie Get Your Gun* in three weeks. The world-famous soprano, who has also appeared in Broadway musicals, introduced *Kiss Me Kate* last year to the Viennese and had such a success that the Viennese newspapers came out the day after the premiere with the headline: "Kiss Me Brenda."

### Detroit Symphony Signs Three-Year Union Contract

John B. Ford, president of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Inc., and Howard Harrington, manager, have negotiated a new three-year master union contract with the Detroit Federation of Musicians through Edouard Werner, Federation president. Terms of the agreement call for lengthening the Symphony employment season and giving unemployment compensation benefits to orchestra members for the first time.

The three seasons involved, beginning with 1957-58, will be 24, 25, and 26 weeks respectively. Ford and Werner pointed out that the longer seasons will give more employment to orchestra members and allow for more extensive tour plans in the future.

In accepting the terms, Ford announced no change in the number of concerts to be presented on the orchestra's evening concert series for season 1957-58. The number will be increased from 18 to 20 the following season.

This is the first time that any major orchestra has negotiated three consecutive annual contracts with its Federation of Musicians local. The Detroit Federation is also unique in being one of the orchestra's major sponsors along with prominent Detroit businesses, industries, financial institutions, foundations, and the city government.

### Kletzki To Make U. S. Debut With Philadelphia Orchestra

Eugene Ormandy has invited Paul Kletzki to come to the United States for the first time in February 1958, to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra in Philadelphia for one week (Feb. 14, 15, 17) and to make his New York debut with them on Feb. 18, in Carnegie Hall. Following his initial appearances in America with the Philadelphia, Kletzki will conduct several other orchestras.

Kletzki, long a major conductor in Europe, has become an international figure only in the last decade. An invitation from Toscanini to conduct at La Scala in 1946 started things moving. In 1948 he toured Australia. For the past 10 years he has been an annual guest conductor with the Paris National and Conservatoire Orchestras. In addition he is regularly with the B.B.C., Concertgebouw, Royal Philharmonic, and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras.

### The Master Singers Celebrate Third Anniversary

The Master Singers and their founder-conductor Joseph Liebling celebrated the third anniversary of their first rehearsal (Mar. 3, 1954) with a gala party attended by all the past and present members of the ensemble. Mr. Liebling and the *a cappella* chorus of 20 mixed voices make their first tour next season under Columbia Artists Management's aegis.

### Czech Philharmonic To Make 35-City Tour of U. S.

The Czech Philharmonic of Prague is announced for its first American tour in the spring of 1958, in accordance with arrangements which have been completed through an exchange of views confirmed by cable between Andre Mertens, vice-president of Columbia Artists Management, and Dr. Vilem Pospisil, official representative of the Czech Philharmonic of Prague. The Czech Philharmonic will be under the direction of Karel Ancerl, its permanent conductor since 1948.

Informal advices from our State Department make it clear that the State Department has taken a sympathetic view of this project.

THE ALMA TRIO, *recently signed by Columbia Artists Mgt., under the personal direction of Kurt Weinhold, will concertize coast-to-coast during the coming season. Members of the Trio are pianist* ADOLPH BALLER, *cellist* GABOR REJTO, *and violinist* MAURICE WILK.

The 60-year-old, 100-member orchestra will be the first to come to the United States from behind the "Iron Curtain," and will be heard in a 35-city tour. This is the sixth orchestra that Columbia has brought over to the United States; the others are the Danish National Orchestra, the Concertegebouw of Amsterdam, the Royal Philharmonic of London, the London Philharmonia, and the Berlin Philharmonic (twice). The orchestra, which will play the works of Czech composers as well as those of the standard repertory, is ranked with Europe's top orchestras.

### Juilliard To Re-locate

The Juilliard School of Music has accepted the invitation of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., to re-locate the School at Lincoln Square and to join with the Metropolitan Opera Association and the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society in sponsoring the development of this area as a center for the performing arts. In making this move, the Directors of the School and the Trustees of the Juilliard Musical Foundation have agreed to two major changes in the operation of the School: (1) To devote the School exclusively to the training of advanced students; (2) To include training in drama, in addition to music and dance. The decision to re-locate the School at Lincoln Square was the result of conferences and studies which have been continuing over the past year and a half. The Lincoln Center was represented by its President, John D. Rockefeller 3rd; and Juilliard by President William Schuman. According to present estimates, Juilliard's move to the Lincoln Center will, at the earliest, take place in time for the opening of the academic year 1960-1961. Meanwhile the School will continue to operate in its present buildings at 120 Claremont Avenue, New York City.

### "Vienna On Parade" To Tour 80 U. S. Cities

A major musical attraction representing the world-famous Deutschmeister Band, the Singing Boys and Girls of the Vienna Woods and Vienna's operetta, called "Vienna on Parade," will be touring the United States beginning January 1958. Arrangements have been concluded by Andre Mertens, Vice President of Columbia Artists Management, Inc., for the appearance of this great Viennese musical attraction which will open its 80-city tour in Washington, D. C. The entire tour is under the personal patronage of His Excellency, Dr. Julius Raab, Chancellor of Austria.

Andre Mertens, Vice President of Columbia Artists Management, Inc., who took the initiative in bringing this major group for the first time to the United States, spoke about some of the participants of "Vienna on Parade." One of the major attractions of this show will be the world-famous Deutschmeister Band, which will come to the United States for the first time as part of "Vienna on Parade." This band was founded in 1741 under the sponsorship of Empress Maria Theresa and received its major support during the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph. Its conductor is Julius Herrmann, one of the most colorful musical personalities of Europe. He was a member of the ensemble which captivated Americans during its appearance at the Chicago World's Fair, under the baton of Carl Michael Ziehrer, the Austrian composer and conductor.

Since the end of World War II, the Deutschmeister Band has toured nearly all European countries and has been unanimously hailed as "the finest ensemble of its kind."

Mr. Mertens emphasized that, in addition to the Deutschmeister Band, the favorite of Old Vienna, which was called by Franz Lehar "the finest of the finest," "Vienna on Parade" will also feature Hedy Fassler, the leading operetta soprano of Vienna; the Singing Boys and Girls of the Vienna Woods; the Grinzing Schrammel Ensemble and their virtuoso zither player.

*Concerts and jam sessions at Bangkok's Royal Palace were high points of* BENNY GOODMAN'S *recent ANTA-sponsored tour of the Far East. Here the King of Swing presents to* PHUMIPHON ADULDEJ, *King of Thailand, a Selmer Signet clarinet. The King, an expert musician, joined Goodman's 14-piece band for some really royal music-making.*

### PREMIERE PERFORMANCES

■ A new and new kind of work by Ezra Ladermann, entitled Chamberconcerto, scored for dancers as well as strings, woodwinds, and percussion, will be premiered Mar. 23 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music by Jean Erdman and her dance company, solo dancer Donald McKayle, and solo flutist Julius Baker.

The new work has involved the invention of a system of notation symbols for the dancers indicating a rhythm pattern (but not "beats") for the dance as agreed upon between dancer and composer.

Mr. Laderman's Duo for Flute and Dancer, a forerunner of the Chamberconcerto, premiered last year, and a new score by Henry Cowell for Miss Erdman's satiric solo "Changing Woman" are also programmed. Mr. Laderman will conduct the entire program.

■ The Schola Cantorum of New York, under its director Hugh Ross, presented two world premieres on Mar. 12 at the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium (Metropolitan Museum of Art) in New York. The new works, both by American composers, were "The Stranger," a dramatic cantata for three male soloists, mixed chorus and orchestra, by Herbert Fromm; and "Inscriptions at the City of Brass," cantata for female narrator, mixed chorus and orchestra, by Jacob Avshalomov. Vera Zorina was narrator in the latter work; soloists in "The Stranger" were John McCollum and Jon Crain, tenors, and McHenry Boatwright, baritone.

■ The premiere of Jack Frederick Kilpatrick's Symphony No. 7 ("The Republic of Texas") was given in honor of Texas Independence Day on Mar. 2 under Victor Alessandro's direction. Commissioned by the Edgar G. Tobin Foundation, the work is written for tenor solo and chorus.

■ On June 19, Igor Stravinsky will be honored on his 75th birthday with a concert under the auspices of the Los Angeles Music Festival. This all-Stravinsky concert, the final event of the Festival's 11th season, will feature the American premiere of Canticum Sacrum, composed by Stravinsky and performed for the first time at the 1956 Venice Music Festival.

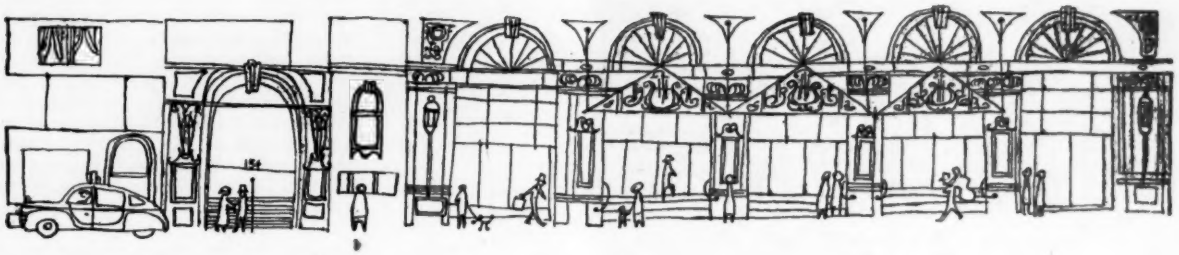
■ The first American performance of Milhaud's "Le Boeuf sur le Toit" for violin and orchestra was performed by the Nashville (Tenn.) Symphony on Mar. 5, with Carroll Glenn as soloist. The work, well known in its original orchestral setting, was transcribed by the composer many years ago for solo violin and orchestra.

### Boris Christoff Booked For U. S. Tour

Boris Christoff, noted Bulgarian basso, will return to the U.S. next fall for a coast-to-coast concert tour, under Hurok management.

Mr. Christoff won wide acclaim in the title role of *Boris Godunov* in his U.S. debut with the San Francisco opera last fall and also in his appearance on the "Festival of Music" over NBC Television.

# ALONG 57th STREET



■ Everybody, even misanthropic Partout, loves parties and there couldn't have been a nicer one than the March 20 luncheon hosted and hostessed by the National Council of the **Metropolitan Opera Guild,** under the aegis of **Mrs. John Barry Ryan** at Riverhouse Club. During the forepart of the morning, the National Council held their business meeting, voting $30,000 for next season's revamped "Don Giovanni," the seventh opera to be sponsored for re-set and production by the Council of the Opera Guild. Partout recalls one occasion when an embittered, severe gentleman rose and enquired *"Why* 'Don Pasquale'?" when the proposal was made for this work. But evidently "Don Giovanni" passed without a dissenting voice. At the party we saw so many celebrities that it would be a task to name all. As a sample, there were the lovely girls from "La Perichole"—**Patrice Munsel, Laurel Hurley, Madelaine Chambers, Rosalind Elias,** and others we missed in the crowd. Present also were **Erich Leinsdorf, Gian-Carlo Menotti, Julius Rudel** (who got a special introduction and a big hand), and from the rival press we saw **Jay Harrison** and **Irving Kolodin** at a distance. Partout was at a table with young **Calvin Marsh, Rolf Gerard** (attractive Mrs. Gerard was snatched from us for another group), and **Lucrezia Bori** (who viewed the calorie-rich luncheon with a twinkling eye and said she intended to enjoy the remaining years of her life, come what may). **Mrs. Belmont** presided with her usual wit and introduced the guests and artists. **Jerome Hines** opened the music part of the day and we left (regretfully) while young **Charles Anthony** was voicing "Che gelida manina" (very appropriate to the cold day, although the Partout hand is not on the romantic side). In introducing the tenor, Mrs. Belmont reminded the group that Anthony had come up through the regional auditions to the Met contract. "He was smart to drop the last part of his real name," she said. "He was actually Charles Anthony Caruso." It was pleasant to lay down the pick and shovel for a time, but back to the chain gang we came. (Wonder if this is a life sentence.)

■ **Robert Merrill,** who has been missing from around here while he sang around the country, took over the elder Germont at the Opera on March 5, replacing indisposed **Bastianini** in "La Traviata." Teamed with **Tebaldi** and **Campora,** the popular American baritone was received in his first seasonal appearance with a tumult of applause. (Welcome home, "Bob." Wonder if you ever drop in at the Health Shop Restaurant at 57 & 7th as you once did.)

■ **Thelma Matesky,** who is even prettier than her pictures (believe it or not) passed by our window and leant over the sill for a chat. The soprano doubled in roles during the recent American Music Week Festival. She gave a delightful program which featured her settings of the Elizabeth Barrett Browning "Sonnets from the Portuguese." (Lovely songs these, and a lovely voice to sing them.) One of the interesting bits of news was Matesky's program for the "Keep America Beautiful" national conference at the Biltmore Hotel, not too far from the Partout eyrie. The gifted young singer wrote the song embodying the title of the organization and, pressed by the pleased members for further inspirational music, wrote "Don't Litter our Land," both songs receiving a Badge of Merit from KAB. Having had some difficulties in our neighborhood (a blighted area), we suggested a version of "A tisket, a tasket, a corner wire basket" for the enlightenment of our near-at-hand residents. How about it, Thelma? Just goes to show what a devotee of the American Art Song can achieve on popular topics.

■ **The Paganini Quartet** is now playing in our town, and **Henri Temianka,** celebrated member of the group, is walking two feet above the sidewalks of New York, the reason being a prospective new Paganini player who made his first appearance at the Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles. His name, David Ivan Temianka, and he weighed in at 9 lbs.

■ **Noah Greenberg,** Director of the **New York Pro Musica** (they play pre-Bach music on ancient instruments) went by with a worried look just before the March 9 recital at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Seems the viola da gamba caught cold and gave the sniffles to the whole family of Elizabethan recorders. It's really serious, Mr. Greenberg tells us; instruments of this rarity are subject to respiratory ailments and have to be coddled, doctored with special "medicine," and swathed in flannels to avoid drafts. How we wish we were a recorder. (Gesundheit!)

■ **Roberta Peters,** radiant with smiles, is taking time out to look with husband Bert Fields for a home, possibly in Scarsdale—beautiful country and good air, all very necessary, says she, not for her primadonna throat but for the momentarily expected family arrival. While house-hunting and waiting for baby, Roberta is not neglecting her art; she is restudying "Lucia," which she will record for RCA with Jan Peerce in Rome come July. Never a dull moment!

■ About 20 years back, a young and pretty soprano was frequently told, "The costume recital will get you yet!" Now here is a singer who has chosen this field. **Yvette Souviron,** will make her New York debut in songs from 13 lands, changing into the garb of each country whose airs she programs. When we wondered about the feat, we were told that she can make a shift into the most elaborate costume, including headdress in 50 seconds. This we want to see. Several of our luscious-voiced singers, not satisfied with the bare bones of Folksong, are making their own settings. We now add Miss Souviron to the list. She has arranged many of the settings and will in addition program four of her own compositions.

■ Partout is always cheered by **Jan Peerce's** warm smile and wave of the hand around the Russian Tearoom vicinity, and we will miss him while he is off on the Down Under tour. He sings May 25 in Auckland, New Zealand, then opens his Australian tour in Melbourne, and will trek around those parts until he is due for recordings in Rome. No rest for this in-demand artist. He will be back before summer really gets by, because he has to sing for us here.

■ The other day we had the pleasure (and it was just that) of meeting and talking with **Igor Markevitch,** one of the most dynamic personages of the baton. More about this in our next opus. His is a wonderfully expressive gift, and his enthusiastic recounting of events quite bowled over your slow-going. . . . . PARTOUT

# THE SYSTEM

*"What's a music critic for, anyway?"*

**By SEYMOUR MANDEL**

NOW wait a minute. Suppose everyone says that this ball player is the best second-baseman in either league. He comes up with the ball every time, hits to either field, runs like Jesse Owens and throws like Bob Feller in the old days. Would he be expected to pitch no-hitters? Of course not—he's a second-baseman! Sure, maybe in a pinch he covers third or the outfield, but there are some limitations on what he's expected to do. Right?

Suppose some other guy holds the record for the hundred-yard dash. So he runs the sixty and the mile relay. Maybe he's good at the running broad-jump, too. But does he run the mile? Never—he's a sprinter!

Let's say this runner becomes a coach at a college. Though he's a sprinter he becomes the over-all track coach. But will he coach fencing or hockey? You kiddin'? He's a track man!

Now suppose some one studies the piano for years. He really knows his instrument. He is familiar with almost everything written for the piano. It's possible that he studied composition and he picked up a bit of clarinet. But does he sing? No. Does he know very much about opera? Not particularly. Well, he *will* as soon as he becomes a music critic. He'll know everything then! He'll know whether or not a conductor's "reading of the score" was inspired or not, he'll comment on a violinist's "faulty intonation which may have been due to the weather," and he'll wish that a soprano's upper tones were more clearly "focused." He'll even mention that a pianist performed "as though he knew what he was about." Suddenly, he's an expert on everything musical.

Sure, if a paper employs a number of critics, there's at least a chance that a violinist will be reviewed by a violin man, an opera performance by someone with operatic training, etc. But, what about papers that employ only one critic? Where do they find their genius! It's too bad for the paper that can't hire more than one music reviewer. It's a damned sight worse on a lot of musicians.

Let's say you're a young 'cellist. Everyone thinks you're ready for a big recital. So you borrow money to hire a hall and you print throwaways and tickets. Maybe you even pay a manager to run your concert. And you work diligently on your program. The night of the concert arrives. Maybe a paper with several critics will assign a qualified reviewer to cover. But the paper with one critic can only send him, and he may not even like the 'cello!

Some say that a critic, whether the only one on the staff or one of several, will, with time, mature. He may be a piano man to begin with, but eventually he'll learn about the 'cello and opera and everything else. Fine! But the question is—while beating on the backs of how many unfortunate musicians?

Recommendation: The music section of a paper that consists of a large staff should be departmentalized — opera men for opera, violin men for violinists, etc. Newspapers with only one music critic should hire specialists now and then to review special programs. This is what some papers do with their Sunday book review sections. A book on the history of France is reviewed by some specialist on French History. Why? Because the subject of the book is his province. In the same way, a concert of 12th-century French music should be reviewed by an expert on that subject. Maybe he teaches at one of our music schools or theological seminaries. Wherever he is, find him. They find the right men for book reviews, don't they? Let them find the right critic for the special concert.

Something else. What's a music critic for, anyway? I say—to do good. For whom? For the music lover, for the performer, for Music. Very well. Let's take a look at how he does it. Marian Anderson sings at Carnegie Hall. The top critic on a paper covers. Right? It always happens that way. Let me ask you a question. What for? What good does he do Marian Anderson? The review he writes is the same review he could have written ten or fifteen years ago. She's great. He praises her to the skies. Is anyone surprised?

Next case: A young contralto comes to New York from, say, Columbus, Indiana, with but one purpose — to make her New York debut. No one ever heard of her. She's not very experienced, but she's got talent. She gives her recital. Which critic on a paper covers? Probably a guy who's only a little less green than the gal he's reviewing. Let's assume he knows the voice and vocal literature. Is he likely to recognize the girl's potential? Hardly. Let me put it this way: Who is better equipped to do the newcomer good—the inexperienced critic or the qualified music critic who's been in the game for twenty-five years? But dollars to buttons says that the more experienced critic would be insulted if anyone should suggest that he review an unknown performer It's part of the system. On the other hand, the less experienced critic might learn something of importance if *he* reviewed Marian Anderson. Don't give me the business that you can't expect the big name critic to review the little girl from the hick town. I'll put it to you simply: The critic is paid, right? So why can't we expect him to do the most good for the money he earns?

Maybe you're right. Maybe no good or change will come of all this. Maybe I'm blowing my stack. *Maybe.* But once upon a time in baseball, you put a man out by hitting him with a thrown ball. They've since changed the rules. There was once a time when the second act of every opera included a ballet sequence. That picture's changed, too. Maybe someday . . .

# NEW YORK CONCERT AND OPERA BEAT

## METROPOLITAN OPERA

**La Traviata,** Feb. 21, E—For one of its world-famous *prime donne* the Metropolitan Opera brought forward a production of Verdi's "La Traviata" whose investiture was lavish. In his many years of operatic coverage at the Met your reporter remembers no presentation so opulently furbished or, in the costuming, so expensively caparisoned. The First Act set alone was something to gape at, with an arched ceiling so high that one's imagination was transported to some such pleasure-dome as Xanadu. The Second Act set of Violetta's summer house, also stately, yet clung closer to former ideas. A huge, winding ramp dominating the ballroom of Flora's villa was thickly populated with figures who were always in action, especially during the entrance of the entertainers and dancers. Act Four was certainly the most eye-filling apartment that a now impoverished consumptive lady of former means had ever ordered.

The evening had been set aside, of course, for Renata Tebaldi, who sang her very first Violetta at the Metropolitan. To say that the *gigantesque* was necessitated by the large — and very handsome — proportions of the lady herself is idle speculation. However, Miss Tebaldi was really beautiful to behold. And this Violetta did behave quite convincingly as if all the vast ocular treasures surrounding her were properly her due.

The performance, under the baton of Fausto Cleva, did not possess life, excepting in patches. This viewer-listener felt more tension in the atmosphere — and not a very salutary kind—than he had ever experienced before. Something of the tentative and the uncertain hovered over the entire proceedings. Having established that point, it follows that virtually everything that happened musically or histrionically had roots in the tension, the tentativeness, the uncertain.

Miss Tebaldi's Violetta proved only spottily convincing vocally. The fault was not the soprano's delivery of her lines, but of the lack in her voice of more than two specific volumes of sound, one very soft, one very loud. Her pianissimi, at that, were not ideal, at least not for this role. And her forte tones, which she emits with considerable force and beauty, were not maneuverable as they ought to be in singing that calls for the greatest tonal variety imaginable. (One remembers Claudo Muzio, who had a smaller voice, of course, but who could captivate a listener with the remarkably refined control of her phrasing at whatever decibels.)

The Second Act duet with Leonard Warren, as the elder Germont, came through as the high point of the event. He was the commanding figure on the stage. In the last act Miss Tebaldi did achieve a measure of the role's demands in music and in acting.

The Alfredo of Giuseppe Campora, intelligently sung, suffered a bit in vocal quality. But the young man is quite musicianly and there is no doubt about his familiarity with the role.

The staging by Tyrone Guthrie was scaled, naturally, according to size. And the costumes by Rolf Gerard included that of Baron Douphol, who suddenly turned up as a high-ranking soldier. Others in the cast were Helen Vanni, as Flora; Charles Anthony, as Gastone; Calvin Marsh, as Douphol, and Clifford Harvuot, as Doctor Grenvil; besides Emilia Cundari, James McCracken, and Osie Hawkins. The dances, staged by Zachary Solov, were attractive. The production, a benefit for the Education Fund of the Metropolitan Opera Guild, was sponsored by the Guild. R. B.

MRS. HARDESTY JOHNSON *(right), noted Manhattan voice teacher, presents a letter from Jean de Reszke written to her late husband, who was a student of De Reszke.* MRS. O'DONNEL HOOVER *accepts the gift on behalf of the Metropolitan Opera Guild.*

**"The Magic Flute,"** Mar. 1, E—With Bruno Walter wielding the baton, there was never any hesitation in the beautifully read and ardently toned "Magic Flute." Stagewise, the story was different. Jerome Hines, handicapped by a fractured ankle, sang with his customary warm sonority as Sarastro, but was static in motion. And while we are second to none in admiration of the beauty of voice and resourceful musicianship of lovely Laurel Hurley, we feel that the casting of a high lyric soprano for the Queen of the Night role is always a mistake. This part calls for dramatic coloratura singing —and there are a few voices of this type extant, although rarely recognized for their values. The arias assigned to the Queen of the Night are lightning flashes in the stormy moments of the opera. Miss Hurley sang excellently within her scope and was rewarded with audience approval but was evidently under strain. In the part of Pamina, Lucine Amara spun the mellifluous legato phrases with translucent vocal quality. (Too bad someone does not teach this promising young diva how to handle herself on stage.) Brian Sullivan was a comely figure as Tamino and sang with ease. In the delightful Papageno and Papagena roles two young singers made fine impressions. Theodore Uppman played the masculine part without clowning but with real humor and clearly dictioned song. In debut as Papagena was pretty Mildred Allen with a voice

matching her personal charm. Here's a young soprano to watch! In supporting roles were Clifford Harvuot, Paul Franke, Osie Hawkins, James MacCracken, Heidi Krall, Madelaine Chambers, Sandra Warfield, all of whom were admirable in vocal timbre and musicianship. We should indeed be proud of the accuracy and clear-voiced singing of the American artists, who seldom receive adequate credit. The English translation by the Martins retained its appeal and impact, and the production, new last season, was as effective as could be expected, though not as completely imaginative as the sparkling score could be. Like "Don Giovanni," there are intervals when the stage is occupied by slow walkers who impede action. But that's part of Mozart. One must just close the eye and open the ear and take the *langsam* with the brilliant. M. C.

## CARNEGIE HALL

**Boston Symphony,** Feb. 6, E—The Boston Symphony, together with Charles Munch, solo pianist Nicole Henriot, and a new symphony by Leo Smit (his first), arrived in Carnegie Hall and, with an accustomed nonchalance, took over the musical scene for an evening. Rarely does this organization disappoint its many New York devotees, either as to programmatic material or its performance. Somebody or other once remarked that any orchestra plays better in a strange auditorium than it does at home. Whether or not this is axiomatic, one has no way of knowing, unless, that is, one should make a career of traveling back and forth with the group.

Anyway, kudos to the Bostonians for their latest efforts in turning in, so efficiently, so interesting a list of works, comprising the aforesaid Smit Symphony, the Second Piano Concerto of Prokofieff, with Miss Henriot as soloist, and the Fourth Symphony of Beethoven.

But "efficiently" is not really the best description of their work, though it was certainly all of that. There were subtleties, for example, peculiar to the warp and woof, to the rise and fall, to the color and rhythm and expression native to the Smit Symphony. It is a work that "sounds." It derives formally from both fairly recent and older viewpoints. It is especially construed to sing its songful measures, of which there are oodles. Truly Mr. Smit may compliment himself on having written a work deserving such a performance. Dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky, the Symphony was a commission of the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and specifically addressed to the 30th birthday of the League of Composers.

The orchestra's beautiful support of Miss Henriot naturally spurred her to greater efforts. In a situation of that sort the thing works both ways and with benefits all too obviously accruing to the music itself. This may be said to have continued through the whole length of the composition, a camaraderie of give-and-take, a producing of pure and exciting ensemble.

Hector Berlioz said remarkable things in his time. Something he wrote down anent the Second Movement of the Beethoven Fourth came to your reporter's mind as he listened to its unreeling by Charles Munch, et al. One took the trouble to look up the quotation and presents it here as a vivid, terse word picture of the movement: "As for the Adagio, it escapes analysis. It is so pure in form, the melodic expression is so angelic and of such irresistible tenderness, that the prodigious art of the workmanship disappears completely." Berlioz speaks, and one may add "Amen!" for such the music was in the Bostonian rendering. It may well be that the Beethoven attained the evening's zenith in performance. R. B.

**Yehudi Menuhin,** violinist, Feb. 8, E—A program of exceptional difficulty was given by Yehudi Menuhin. It was all-Bach and all works for solo violin. Specifically, there were the Sonata in G Major, the Partita in E Major, and the Partita in D Minor. Ambitious certainly, but the program was also an affirmation of faith in one's listeners, as well as a compliment to their tastes. It is true that the violinist posed himself a tartar of a list. But it may be reported that he has always faced difficulty with equanimity, has always been an intellectually curious, scholarly musician, whom some of us, from time to time, have been pleased to describe as an aristocrat of the violin. Certainly there is not one iota of the exhibitionist in him. If anything, on that score, he is almost too retiring.

That a capacity audience attended affirms, in turn, the high esteem he enjoys among music lovers. That the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program proved more elusive technically than might have been true a few years back is another story entirely. None could deny the artist his soaring musical attainments, the nobility of his style, the beautiful balance, the justness of his readings. There were ungrateful passages in the Fugue of the Sonata which, though delivered with more than a hint of insecurity, here and there, yet emerged whole in the general scheme. His hesitation and tentativeness, however, lasted never more than an instant anywhere.

The Chaconne that graces the D Minor Partita is another expanded area of almost brutal challenge. Yet Mr. Menuhin gave a full expressive account of it, though certain patches wanted surer defining. It was beautiful, however, to observe his intellectual mastery of every situation. And that called for highest praise. R. B.

**Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch,** conductor; **Nicole Henriot,** pianist, Feb. 9, A—At about four o'clock in the afternoon, Brahms' First Symphony was turned into a massive, rubato piece of French impressionism. What Mr. Munch does to Debussy's "La Mer" makes it one of the most exciting works in the orchestral repertoire, but when he pummels each phrase of Brahms, or sets it palpitating, we object. There were times when we thought we were in the middle of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" or "Scheherezade." The brasses blazed and the strings shimmered, but poor Brahms was beaten into shapeless putty. The rest of the program was much more satisfactory, with Nicole Henriot performing Prokofieff's Second Piano Concerto brilliantly, and Mr. Munch taking his beat judiciously from her. There is little depth or expressivity in this work, but Miss Henriot swung through its percussive pyrotechnics with flashing ease. Britten's "Variations on a Theme by Frank Bridge," which opened the program, were played in the best Boston string style, and with respect for the composer's austere sensuousness. K. H.

**Renata Tebaldi,** soprano, Feb. 10, E—For the first time this season, Carnegie Hall has been filled to overflowing. Every seat was taken, the stage, where added seats were improvised, was filled and many others stood. Responding to this local enthusiasm, gracious Renata Tebaldi sang like an angel.

Not only does this remarkable soprano have a magnificent vocal instrument, but in addition she has uncommon artistry and a great warmth that is tempered with intelligence. The artist limited herself to songs and arias in her native Italian, but her program nevertheless had considerable variety. The first grouping was given over to early Italian arias chosen from Handel, Galuppi, and Scarlatti, and climaxed with two demanding Mozart concert arias. Then came a charming group of three Rossini songs, "La Regata Veneziana" in Venetian dialect. Perhaps the high point, if one must select a high point, was her intense and beautiful singing of the "Dove sono" aria from Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro." The second half of the program ranged through lyrical songs and arias by Mascagni, Respighi, Davico, and Tosti. Again, the audience felt dramatic intensity in her final programmed aria, "Mi chiamano Mimi" from Puccini's "La Bohème." The audience responded with a near-ovation after each performance. After several encores, the audience reluctantly accepted Mme. Tebaldi's decision "not to add another." It was an evening long to remember, an evening which found a great artist at her very best. Fine keyboard support was furnished by Martin Rich. C. G.

**Cleveland Orchestra,** Feb. 12, E—Now a regular visitor to New York, the Cleveland Orchestra, under its redoubtable conductor George Szell, spoke convincingly for the state of symphonic music in Cleveland. The program offered New York its initial hearing of Bohuslav Martinu's "The Frescoes of Piero della Francesca," a score composed during a sojourn on the French Riviera, in 1955. Companioning it were the Schumann Symphony No. 2 in C Major (Op. 61) and the Brahms Violin Concerto (Op. 77), with the young Polish violinist Henryk Szeryng as soloist.

There was a surprise in store for your reviewer—and, possibly, for some other listeners among the audience—in the remarkably expressive quality of all of Mr. Szell's renderings. Truthfully, I had believed all along that of the conductor's many sides, the expressive was always the one least evident. But this time he made the Clevelanders sing. And they sang and communicated and were all of them committed, my fancy suggested, to disproving that heresy.

It is not extravagant to say that the orchestra played with almost a fantastic polish. The speed and accuracy of the first violins, as they tore through the sixteenths of the Scherzo in the Schumann amounted, really, to an en masse refinement. Clearly, the Cleveland is one of the world's great symphonic aggregations. That was the talk, anyway, during intermission. And less idle—or more exact—remarks it would be hard to imagine.

Like all the pieces that Martinu writes, his "Frescoes" show the professional hand, the knowing avoidance of cliché, the solid command of orchestral technique. The composer ascribes no special descriptive powers to the music he has written. The three movements are: Andante poco moderato, its subject, "the group of wives with the Queen of Sheba"; Adagio, "Dream of Constantine"; and Poco allegro, ". . . no particular fresco as its subject, but as a kind of general view of the frescoes, calling attention to two battle scenes and the many fascinating details." Hence, the approach was towards creating pure music instead of programmatic description.

It is undeniably a handsome score, this latest one of Martinu's. It does have a power to convey moods, certain emphatic things, possibly, and others that rise to the mind and evanesce in a deepening orchestral mist. Perhaps, it would be best for the listener not to have seen the frescoes, or their reproductions, in order to escape connecting literally subject and music.

Finally, the Brahms Violin Concerto, which obtained an orchestral accompaniment of great beauty and depth, suffered in the solo line a woeful lack of such qualities. Mr. Szeryng held his instrument not at an angle, but with the face flat and parallel to the ceiling. The size of the tone was diminished surely because of that, though the limited musical frame of the solo performance could not, even in other circumstances, give it more than an ordinary importance. R. B.

**N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony, Bruno Walter** conducting, Feb. 14, E—This reviewer doubts if Mahler's expansive


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Second Symphony, "The Resurrection," ever received a warmer, more careful, or more effective reading than that supplied by the Philharmonic and conductor Walter this evening. The maestro's affection for the music and his complete understanding of the work were continually in evidence. To be sure, there were many moments of great emotional impact, but in our opinion this gargantuan composition would be enhanced by judicious cutting. Mr. Walter loved every minute of it and made no cuts, so far as we could tell. Apparently the audience agreed with the conductor, for most of the listeners loved every minute of it too.

For the rather diminutive choral section in the finale movement, the Philharmonic was joined by the excellent Westminster Choir and two splendid soloists. At the invitation of Mr. Walter, soprano Maria Stader flew over from Switzerland for the performance. She was an excellent choice for the solo soprano part. Even more rewarding was her singing earlier in the program of three Mahler songs. Here, she demonstrated a unique understanding for the lieder style. Her singing was as near perfection as human talents can allow. The contralto soloist for the Mahler symphony was Maureen Forrester, whose rich, powerful contralto voice added much to the performance. The evening opened with a robust reading of Beethoven's Overture, "Prometheus." The most rewarding music of the evening, however, was the group of three Mahler songs.

There is considerable talk that this may be Maestro Walter's last season with the Philharmonic. If this is true, we can only regret his retirement. Certainly he can remember with pleasure this evening's performances. It is rare that our orchestra has played with more warmth and with a better feeling for ensemble. G. W.

**Artur Rubinstein,** pianist, Feb. 15, E —If I say at the outset that in this all-Chopin recital Rubinstein was not in top form, it would be wrong to construe it as an example of a pygmy picking at a giant. The truth is that it is difficult to remember anything but great playing. Rubinstein's second best is Olympian in everything of first importance — breadth of conception, nuance without distortion, strength, caressing beauty, and passion. In a program that included the Scherzo in B Minor (Op. 20), the Scherzo in B-flat Minor (Op. 31), the Sonata in B-flat Minor (Op. 35), the Ballade in G Minor (Op. 23), all of these qualities came into play in interpretations of enormous virility and control. But the smaller works were no less sensitively realized. The Nocturne in D-flat Major (Op. 27), for example (which the lady behind me informed her escort she *also* played), conveyed that rare impression that you were listening to an improvisation. Only an artist who at every moment senses the complete form of a work can do this, because technically it is accomplished by very minute deviations from strictness of various kinds—the accented weak beat, the eloquent pause—any one of which, overdone, can destroy the musical line. Nor is this the kind of artistry that can be taught, because in part it comes about in response to an audience, and Rubinstein plays upon his audience as sensitively as the keyboard. This is why he has been called a great showman, why his concerts are sold out in advance, why the audience's demand for encores is insatiable. Did I say something about not being in top form? Forget it. I don't even remember what I had in mind. W. C.

**Artur Rubinstein,** pianist, Feb. 16 — From the manner in which Artur Rubinstein played Chopin, at this second recital in a row, one deemed him quite capable of embarking on a nonstop voyage through the composer's entire work. The rigors of the previous evening had affected neither his pianism, nor his stamina, for he whaled into his programmatic material with an enthusiasm, a vitality and, not to be discounted, an art of excelling finish and stylistic perfection.

For his second-night listeners he had prepared a list consisting of the Polonaise in F-sharp Minor (Op. 44); Four Etudes; the Nocturne in F-sharp Minor (Op. 48); the Sonata in B Minor (Op. 58); the Barcarolle (Op. 60); the Ballade in A-flat Major (Op. 47, No. 3); the Valse in C-sharp Minor (Op. 64); and the Polonaise in A-flat Major (Op. 53). There were many encores, you can wager, and not all of them Chopin.

Some years ago I found fault with Mr. Rubinstein for not playing more modern works in his programs. I argued that an artist of his stature would surely be the one to initiate a demand for worthy compositions. Well, I got a note to meet him at lunch. And in the course of a very charming afternoon—lunch ran for one hour; coffee, liqueurs, and conversation for three more—Mr. Rubinstein said, in essence, that he had introduced many such works, including those of Villa-Lobos, Stravinsky, and so on. But that now he would not play anything, no matter how glamorous the composer, if the piece did not please him. "I must believe implicitly in the music I play, and that's about it," he said.

The recital was extraordinary, first of all, in the manner of its devising. (One can easily conceive of all-Chopin programs that could, after a spell, become boresome.) Then, the youthfulness of the playing, the ultra-refined expression, the wealth of detail, and the subtlety of the phrasing were qualities always present.


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It is not exaggeration to describe his Chopin as the youngest ever. Certainly it is the most varied. And if notes were missed, throughout the very special communion between composer and performer, and between performer and listeners, how little they really mattered is reflected in the fact that nobody I spoke to even mentioned them. Artur Rubinstein and Chopin represent to this reporter one of the fabulous ceremonials of our time. One hopes to enjoy many more of them.
R. B.

**Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati,** conductor; **Yehudi Menuhin,** violinist, Feb. 17, E—Literature has Camus, art has Picasso, and music has Bartok. It is easy to understand why Bartok's music was not popular during his life, but its posthumous popularity is harder to understand. The adulation is a sort of intellectual James Deanism, a combination of fashion and cult. For whatever reason, the reverence in the hall was sepulchral. Applause came often in the wrong places, or was uneasily delayed, as Mr. Dorati put his men through the suite from "The Miraculous Mandarin," the Violin Concerto, and the Concerto for Orchestra. Mr. Menuhin played the concerto magnificently, with technical ease and sumptuous tone. As many record collectors know, Mr. Dorati has made of his orchestra a finely machined precision tool. I only wonder whether virtuosity is being pursued for its own sake. The music is masked and garlanded with so many handsome and glittering effects, it has the unreality, at times, of a theatrically beautiful woman. Sponsored by the American Hungarian Studies Foundation, the concert, however, had a real and important purpose: to make advanced schooling available to a group of Hungarian students. K. H.

**Verdi Requiem; Philadelphia Orchestra, Ormandy** conducting, with soloists and chorus, Feb. 19, E—Assisted by the combined forces of the Rutgers University Choir (F. Austin Walter, Director) and the Philadelphia Orchestra Chorus (William R. Smith, Director), and four outstanding soloists —Leontyne Price, soprano; Nan Merriman, contralto; Richard Tucker, tenor; Georgio Tozzi, bass—Eugene Ormandy led a performance of this great work that was distinguished for variety, control, force, and smoothness. It is no easy matter to subordinate the efforts of some three hundred performers to a single over-riding conception, but Ormandy managed to do this magnificently and without permitting the dramatic accents of the work to destroy its total character. If anything was missing, it was a dramatic vigor on the part of the chorus in such sections as the "Rex tremendae" and "Tuba Mirum." But with such a youthful chorus this was impossible, and it is to Ormandy's credit that he worked within this particular limitation, projecting the intention of the composer without the complete means of realizing it. The soloists were well chosen not alone for their individual abilities but for ensemble as well. Nan Merriman did a superb job, vocally and interpretatively, in an extremely demanding contralto part, and Tozzi's voice had exciting resonance as well as body. Leontyne Price's singing was completely ravishing. Her flawless musicianship, interpretative finesse, and unearthly beauty of sound were truly inspired. Tucker is to be commended for his accuracy of intonation in a very taxing role; he was somewhat less than the equal of his colleagues, however, in point of style. But make no mistake about it, this was a great performance of great music. The audience made this plain in a deafening ovation. W. C.

## TOWN HALL

**Kurt Saffir,** pianist, Feb. 7, E—Like most recital programs, this one began with a little Bach and Mozart for the pianist to warm up on while latecomers cooled their heels at the door. But instead of proceeding chronologically as far as Debussy or Bartok, Mr. Saffir chose to stop at Brahms, whose painstaking introspection seemed sympathetic to his temperament. The most sensitive playing of the evening was done in two Chopin works, a Nocturne and a posthumous Valse, both in E Minor. Schubert's open-hearted A Major Sonata (Op. 120) was performed simply, sincerely, and with restraint. But the Maestoso of Beethoven's Sonata (Op. 111) was overemphatic and angry, with little tenderness, and the Arietta struck us as lethargic, over-planned, and metronomic. Mr. Saffir is conscientious and musical, but often seems to be playing to and for himself. What his playing wants most is more liberation and less deliberation. K. H.

**Obernkirchen Children's Choir,** Feb. 9, E—The Obernkirchen Children's Choir, on its third American tour, came back to Town Hall for a concert of classic, romantic, and folk songs, under the capable and musicianly direction of Edith Moeller, its leader and founder. The purpose of this year's tour is to raise funds to provide homes for homeless children in their native town of Obernkirchen. The delightfully colorful costumes of the group made for a brilliant stage picture.

Opening the program with "America the Beautiful," there followed groups of songs by Schubert, Brahms, Schumann, de Lasso, Sandello, a long group of international folk songs, compositions by Bartok, Distler, Knab, and Moeller, and concluding with an interesting presentation in English of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." The choral work, largely *a cappella*, was at all times unforced in volume, well balanced and beautifully integrated, with the boys' voices forming a subdued but firm and harmonious background for the projection of the youthful female singing section. Dynamic variation was not a part of this earnest, well-disciplined group's attributes; frequently the continued tonal sweetness and delicacy of the vocal lines gave way to pleasant monotony. The linguistic ability of the young singers, including excellent English pronunciation, was evidenced throughout the evening. James Benner was at the piano. L. C.

**John Modenos,** baritone, Feb. 10, E—John Modenos, winner of the ninth annual American Theatre Wing Concert Award, was heard in his debut recital in a rather lengthy program including works of Handel, Boyce, Schubert, Brahms and Fauré, the aria "Nemico della patria" from "Andrea Chenier," the first American performance of Four Love Songs by Irving Mopper, and a concluding group of four Greek folk songs.

Mr. Modenos' voice is of adequate size, although of no outstanding proportions. The quality is pleasant, especially through the middle range, with shifting color and an occasional tonal constriction at the top. He is a serious singer and, in the main, evidenced skill in the use of the voice, musicianship, and a commendable sense for interpretation.

The baritone gave an excellent presentation of the two Handel arias from the oratorios "Samson" and the "Occasional" Oratorio. This group also included "The Song of Momus to Mars" by Boyce. The Schubert and Brahms lieder were sung with a high degree of vocal fluency and in traditional style, and in the "Feldeinsamkeit" of Brahms the singer gave an outstanding exhibition of smooth legato singing and quiet expressiveness. He did not fare so well in the same composer's fast moving phrases of the "O liebliche Wangen." Also in the Giordano aria from "Andrea Chenier" there appeared difficulties still to be surmounted in the higher tessitura. Frequent resort to explosiveness of tone resulted in a decline of true vocal accomplishment in the terminating climactic phrases.

The Four Love Songs by Irving Mopper, despite the baritone's artistic interpretations, added no great measure of success to the program.

As a whole, it was a recital of worth, sung by a rising young and talented artist. Otto Herz was the accompanist. L. C.

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*Rehearsal for world premiere of* NED ROREM'S *"The Poets' Requiem" by The American Concert Choir and Orchestra on Feb. 15 under the direction of* MARGARET HILLIS *(right), with* ELLEN FAULL *(center) as soloist. The composer is at the piano. (See review below.)*

**Robert McFerrin,** baritone, Feb. 12, E —Robert McFerrin was heard in an outstanding song recital consisting of Bach, Purcell, and Stradella compositions, Wolfram's "Blick ich umher" aria from "Tannhäuser," four familiar but distinctive Schubert lieder, French chansons by Duparc, Chausson, and Fauré, songs in English by Ames, Griffes, Duke, Gibbs, and Crist, and a concluding group of Negro Spirituals.

Throughout the evening Mr. McFerrin exhibited a voice of splendid quality and adequate range, a well-developed and controlled vocal technic, suavity of musical phrasing, and intelligent interpretative ability. In general, his well-disciplined voice showed itself capable of sustaining notes uniformly on any pitch and to shade tonally from ringing forte tones to pianissimo, or vice versa, as needed.

The Bach "Bist du bei mir" and "Willst du dein Herz mir schenken" were impressively sung, with a fine legato vocal line and artistically wrought phrasing. His rendition of the Schubert group was stylistically and vocally excellent, and the commendably serious portrayal of "Memnon" and the fluent delicacy of "Das Lied in Grünen" were highly effective. The Tannhäuser aria seemed to be the least impressive of the baritone's offerings, possibly due to the fact that this is not imposing enough as a separate number on a recital program.

Norman Johnson, at the piano, was a most competent and sympathetic accompanist. **L. C.**

**Bach Aria Group,** Feb. 13, E — For literate musicians the Bach Aria Group is one of the most satisfying ensembles of our day. The soloists are selected for superior voice and style, and the programs are always occasions for rejoicing. On this evening two infrequently heard works were offered—the "Funeral Ode," composed on the death of Queen Christian Eberhardine of Saxony, and a Cantata especially composed for the birthday celebration of King Augustus III, the Queen's son. An interesting feature of the Bachian design was the mourning of the sectors of the little country, each represented by a river boundary. Again in the Birthday Cantata, rivers were paramount, each being voiced by a soloist. Bach's descriptive music was atmospheric and colorful; the bell motifs of the first work and the fluent passages indicating the flow of the waters were most effective. George London, bass-baritone of the Metropolitan Opera, sang the magnificent aria from Cantata 56, "Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen," splendidly. Admirable singing by Carol Smith, alto, Eileen Farrell, soprano, and Jan Peerce, tenor, heightened the importance of the concert. Frank Brieff conducted with sure control and musicality. **M. C.**

**The American Concert Choir and Orchestra,** Feb. 15, E—Brahms' "Nänie," Ned Rorem's "The Poets' Requiem" (world premiere), and Haydn's Missa Solemnis in D Minor, as directed by Margaret Hillis, held the attention from beginning to end. The Choir, a first-rate singing group, is particularly to be commended for its almost constant aliveness and for its tone quality. There is almost no forcing, even in the extremes of range and volume. The diction, however, sometimes left something to be desired.

The text for "The Poets' Requiem," consisting of selections from Kafka, Rilke, Cocteau, Mallarmé, Freud, Gide (all in translation), and Paul Goodman appear in Goodman's novel "The Dead of Spring." All concern themselves with death, and it is therefore surprising to find very little that is mournful in Rorem's engrossing music. It would appear that Freud's words (read by a narrator), "At bottom no one believes in his own death," had been the composer's motivation. At times there is defiance; at others, serenity; striking melodic invention pervades the work. The orchestration is expert, and in the main the orchestra performed expertly. Notable settings are given the Rilke and Gide extracts and the concluding "I don't know" from Mallarmé. Ellen Faull, soprano, was the authoritative soloist in this composition.

"Nänie" and the Mass were a joy to hear. In the latter Miss Faull, Gloria Sylvia, mezzo-soprano, Grant Williams, tenor, and Mack Harrell, baritone, were the effective soloists. Mr. Harrell's singing of the "Qui tollis" was profoundly moving. C. G.

**Andres Segovia,** guitarist, Feb. 16, E—This evening's concert was one of supreme gentleness and sensitivity. The music ranged from 16th- and 17th-century works for lute through contemporary works for guitar, the interim being pieced out with transcriptions from other instrumental literatures.

The opening "Song of the Emperor" and "Differencias on a popular Spanish tune" by Narvaez created the antique, other-worldly atmosphere that remained throughout the evening. Three Pieces for Lute by John Dowland followed, each of them a delicate and lovely dance. The "Preambulo and Gavota" by A. Scarlatti, discordant in the first movement and poignant in the second, contrasted with the scale-figurations of the D. Scarlatti Sonata that followed it. This section of the program, devoted to baroque works, closed with a popular Bach Bourrée.

The 19th century, which provided so few works for fretted, stringed instruments, was represented by arrangements of short works by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Paganini, and Grieg.

In the closing section of the concert we arrived at highly idiomatic modern works that were the prize offerings of the evening, notably Villa Lobos's Three Studies and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's "Preludio, quasi una improvizazioni." Here, and in pieces by Espla, Granados, and Albeniz, the two qualities that so distinctively mark Segovia and his instrument came most fully into their own: amazing contrasts of tone quality, from twangy harpsichord sounds to the almost flute-like virginal quality; and incredibly fine but easily discernible differentiations in dynamic shading, from tiny, tenuous whispers to triple fortissimos. J. L. B.

**Gregory Bemko,** 'cellist, Feb. 17, A—We had a very striking example of what a bad case of nerves can do to a performer. In his opening work, the Suite No. 3 in C Major by Bach, he appeared to be literally scared stiff. As a result his tone was anemic and scratchy, and his interpretation unconvincing. The situation was better in the Concerto No. 2 by Henk Badings, which followed, but it was still not impressive playing.

But after intermission we heard a new performer. In the Sonata in F-sharp Minor by Jean Huré he played with a smooth and gracious tone, and with the elegance that the French style needed. The final group of short works was appealing, too, and he showed the fire and temperament needed for the "Requiebros" by G. Cassado. However, while his tone was attractive throughout the Chopin E-flat Nocturne, which he played for an encore, his phrases often lacked the poise needed for this elaborate melody. But he is still an enjoyable performer when he controls his nervousness. Ralph Linsley was the accompanist.

The Badings concerto, which received its first New York performance, is somber, but has many appealing passages. I would like to hear it again in a better performance, and with the orchestral accompaniment that it really needs. The Huré Sonata is very French and is idiomatically written for the instrument. But it had little worthwhile to say. R. S.

## KAUFMANN AUDITORIUM

**Academy Chamber Players, Dean Ryan** conducting, Feb. 6, E—After listening to the first half of a program featuring works by Vivaldi, Stradella, Handel, and Mozart, my general conclusion is that Mr. Ryan and his group were insufficiently prepared and ill-equipped for the task they set themselves. Mr. Ryan's aggressive flailing of the Vivaldi works might have succeeded in at least conveying the sheer excitement of the music, had the orchestra been able to respond adequately to his rather eccentric demands. In brief works by Stradella and Handel, Mr. Ryan's conducting was excessively romantic and mannered. The great Mozart Adagio and Fugue in C Minor, which concluded the first half of the program, was poorly controlled and notable only for the violence of its execution. H. G.

## CARNEGIE RECITAL HALL

**Owen Berger,** pianist, Feb. 10, A—Untypically, Mr. Berger's program began with a modern work, Bartok's "Out of Doors" Suite. He played it with authority, giving considerable excitement to the volcanic rhythms and churning percussive effects. But Beethoven's "Appasionata" Sonata, while broadly conceived, was less effective. The dynamic sameness, and continual stress on the left-hand parts, overemphasized many details at the expense of significant phrases. The lyric motifs were lost in clamor and thunder, and purely lyric sections, such as the Andante, were pedestrian. Mr. Berger closed his program with Beethoven's Sonata in A Flat (Op. 110) and Ravel's Sonatine. K. H.

**Robert Conant,** harpsichordist, Feb. 12, E—In Thomas Tomkins' "A Sad Pavan for These Distracted Times," three Couperin pieces, and a Pachelbel Chaconne, Mr. Conant proved himself a scholarly and capable player. But in the following six Scarlatti Sonatas, he added another musical dimension, graceful and personal, and the harpsichord tone was suddenly tinted with a haunting variety of delicate colors. Mr. Conant then left the 18th century for our own to give David Kraehenbuehl's "Toccate per Cembalo (1955)" its first N. Y. performance. The harpsichord timbre is well-suited to modern dissonance, but the restless, complex rush of notes in this work sometimes filled the air with little more than a churning drone. The Bach Toccata, which closed the program, although built of fewer notes, more simply grouped, said more. Mr. Conant served both Bach and Kraehenbuehl with distinction. K. H.

**Inga Laure,** soprano, Feb. 17, A—There can be no doubt that Miss Laure chose her interesting program with great care. It consisted of six neat groups, each in a different language: Mozart (Italian); Brahms and Strauss (German); Debussy (French); Sibelius (Swedish); Kilpinen (Finnish); and


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Jansen (English). She handled each language with remarkable fluency and clarity, making the familiar tongues perfectly understandable and giving the less familiar ones at least an appearance of coherence and meaningfulness that could not have been achieved unless the singer knew very well what she was about.

Nor was Miss Laure ever in doubt about the notes; they were produced at the intended pitch and with the proper rhythmic vitality. At times, however, we were surprised by certain changes of quality. The blame was difficult to place: Miss Laure's lower register often produced the same effect as a violinist does by changing from a stopped string with vibrato to a plain open string. It must also be said that Miss Laure's voice was most effective in works where her accompanist, James Fleetwood, could provide a rich and full accompaniment, as in Strauss's "Zueignung" or Debussy's "Chevaux de bois," for then her voice sounded truly beautiful. In the more lyric songs that dominated the program, her voice was too forceful. While generally pleased with the program, we had the general conviction that Inga Laure could best perform expansively written music involving orchestra, and we understood her earlier success with Wagnerian roles in the Helsinki opera. J. L. B.

**Albert Fuller,** harpsichordist, Feb. 18, E—Those of us who were in Carnegie Recital Hall on this evening were privileged to hear a concert of fine music played by a performer whose very musical instincts were always supported by a searching and imaginative intellect. Among Mr. Fuller's excellent qualities were a rhythmic sense that was always steady, except when the basic pulse was properly counterpointed by that rich and affective rubato so beloved by many harpsichordists; colorful registration and ornamentation; and a technique that was clear and generally accurate.

It would be hard to pick favorites in this recital, which began with a Sarabande in D Minor by Chambonnières, and continued with seven very interesting movements selected from suites by Gaspard Le Roux. Couperin's "The French Frivolities" or "The Masquerades"—a series of short pieces each with its own colorful program—proved a delight, as was the same composer's "Musete de Choisi, Musete de Taverni" which, with its extremely striking drone-type bass, scored the biggest hit with the audience.

After intermission we heard an original and very musical performance of the C Minor Partita of Bach. It was only in the last movement of this work (The Capriccio), which was improperly rushed ,and the following Scarlatti group which closed the program, that I had any reservations about his playing. I was unfamiliar with the particular Scarlatti Sonatas chosen, and found them difficult to follow, but I suspect that this was largely because they were taken too fast and noisily. But in the over-all picture, it was still a very fine evening. R. S.

## WNYC AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Feb. 12,** Town Hall, A—The first concert of the 18th annual American Music Festival, performed by various instrumental soloists and the Knickerbocker Chamber Players under Herman Neumann and Simon Sadoff, opened with Antheil's Serenade for Strings, a work notable only for its excessive resemblance to Prokofiev and Dvorak-in-the-New World. It showed that the former "bad boy" had settled down to writing in accepted forms, but with this has relied too freely on the ideas of other composers. Also on the program were Creston's well-knit but very mild Partita for Flute, Violin and Strings, Hermann Berlinski's ambitious, but pedestrian "For the Peace of Mind," and Paul Nordhoff's derivative Concerto for Piano, Violin and Strings in which the excellent soloists were Eugene List and Carroll Glenn.

**Feb. 13,** Manhattan School of Music, E—The program opened with Vittorio Giannini's Second Symphony, a work comprised largely of huge tonal blocks in the brass, which impresses by its sheer sonic power, but shows a definite lack of direction. Two bombastic allegros surround an expressive, lyrical adagio in which Giannini gives adequate proof of the fact that he can produce more satisfying and coherent music when relying less on overwhelming masses of sound. The other extended work on the program was Peter Mennin's Fifth Symphony. The agitated opening allegro at first seems a harbinger of good things to come, but it soon becomes apparent that a few ideas are being stated over and over again, with, as in the Giannini symphony, too much reliance on the aural impressiveness of the brass and winds; the use of strings is so sparse as to make it seem an afterthought. The bleak adagio is the weakest movement of the work, for here Mennin is completely at a loss what to do without his governing brass section. In spite of the symphony's considerable shortcomings, it came as a relief to hear at least a few ideas so well stated after listening to Robert Ward's very dull "Euphony for Orchestra" and Griffes' dated "White Peacock," which rounded out the program. The orchestra of the Manhattan School performed brilliantly under Jonel Perlea's leadership.

**Feb. 14,** Carnegie Hall, A—In this concert, presented by the National Association for American Composers and Conductors, Howard Mitchell led the Symphony of the Air in Maurice Weed's First Symphony, the Violin Concerto by Earl George, and Morton Gould's "Declaration." Mitchell's strong leadership and the splendid solo work of Rafael Druian in the George concerto made this rambling, somewhat obtuse work catch fire on occasion. "Declaration" is an orchestral piece dealing with certain aspects of the writing of the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Gould may have had a noble cause in mind, but as it emerges in performance, "Declaration" is a pompous, shallow work that would be better suited to the sound track of a Hollywood epic than the concert hall. Mitchell led the works with devotion, but his efforts were labor lost, considering the quality of the music.

**Feb. 14,** Hunter College Assembly Hall, E—The first selection on this program, which also included works by Chopin and Wagner, was Anton Bilotti's Symphony in C, presented as part of the American Music Festival. As performed by the American Symphony of New York under Enrico Leide, the work was mellifluously played and indicated the composer's knowledge of form and fluent use of orchestral color to convey interesting, individualistic idioms of sound.

**Feb. 15,** Brooklyn Academy of Music, E—The U.S. Army Band and Chorus of Washington, D. C., under Maj. Hugh Curry, performed a program of minor works by Creston, Sherburn, and Gillis, among others, concluding with a rousing reading of Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever."

**Feb. 16,** Carl Fischer Hall, E—An unusually interesting program opened with Three Nocturnes (for violin, cello and piano) by Ernest Bloch. As performed by the Classic Trio—Seymour Rubinstein, violin, Olga Zilboorg, cello and Robert Guralnik, piano—a high standard of playing was set through the group's subtle blending of tone and admirable ensemble. Norman dello Joio's "Variations and Capriccio" were brilliantly played by violinist Renato Bonacini and pianist Carl Mosbacher. In this work, dello Joio seemed to have moved further afield from his former tonalities with startling, galvanic results.

Selections from Herbert Fromm's song cycle "The Crimson Sap" were sung with distinguished vocal style and excellent technique by Mary McMurray, mezzo-soprano, with John Wustman at the piano. Set to poems by Jean Harper, herself a noted singer, these songs are particularly appealing in atmosphere and musical texture. Completing the program were Mennin's Sonata Concertante for violin and piano, and Ross Lee Finney's Trio for violin, cello and piano.

**Feb. 18,** Carl Fischer Hall, E—The National Music Sorority, Mu Phi Epsilon, presented a program that included works by Ruth Bradley, Blythe Owen, Alan Brings, Robert Beckhard, Herbert Inch, and some effective settings of verses from T. S. Eliot's "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" by Robert Dennis. Instrumental soloists and the Mastersingers under Joseph Liebling were featured performers.

H. G. and M. C.

# THE NATIONAL SCENE

## HOUSTON

■ America tries to avoid public subsidy of the arts. Things are expected to pay for themselves, and the best way to get what you want is to want it so much that you find a way to get it. Houston, Texas, wanted it that much, and boasted some influential citizens who were convinced that opera could be produced in the finest traditions on the home front. The fortunate constellation of an aggressive board of directors, a musically well-versed conductor, a brilliant and imaginative stage designer, a talented and considerate director, a bold—perhaps too bold—choice of operas, and the selection of some stars have produced a new stronghold for the operatic art.

Last summer a group of Houston opera enthusiasts decided to form their own Grand Opera Association. Walter Herbert was chosen as its musical and artistic director, a position he has held for many years in similar ventures in New Orleans and Denver. The group was most fortunate to secure as designer Andreas Nomikos from Athens, Greece, on leave of absence from the Royal National Theatre, who revealed himself as an artist of real imagination combined with a great deal of practical ability to fit the specific circumstances (such as working on a stage normally occupied by the Houston Symphony, without trap doors, and with poor sidelines). The stage director, Rex Harrower, was able to unite perfectly the professional and amateur elements.

Houston's first local opera venture, with all but a few of the leading roles sung by local residents, attracted many Texans, both enthusiastic and skeptical to the *Cenerentola, Tosca,* and *Traviata* performances. When the lights faded out over the final chords of each opera, Houston's musical society was convinced!

Rossini's *Cinderella* gave much cause for rejoicing. It was a deliciously brilliant performance. Frances Bible, as the star, showed a strong, beautiful, and agile voice, and all others were appropriately cast, including Davis Cunningham, Richard Wentworth, and the very promising local baritone Guy Gardner. A special feature was the first appearance of the "Houston Foundation for Ballet Workshop." With a mixture of family and civic pride, the audience gave them the ovation this exceedingly stylish and polished young company deserved. The dashing choreography was the work of Tatiana Semenova, the main ballet school's director.

Puccini's *Tosca* received a glowing performance as the second in the series, and the Grand Opera Association outdid itself in visual, musical, and vocal perfection. Although greeted every time she appeared with thundering applause—being a "local girl"—Nancy Swinford Blackburn, in the title role, was perhaps the only artist who did not measure up to the general standard of the performance, which surpassed the expectation of those who had come from outside willing to excuse any deficiency in production the Houston effort might have shown. The role is sometimes called a "soprano-killer," and Mrs. Blackburn survived it only half of the way. She has excellent musicianship but the voice tends to be shrill at times and, unfortunately, her stage deportment leaves much room for improvement. The other singers were all excellent throughout, such as David Poleri as Cavaradossi, and Philip Maero, a real "find" of whom we will hear often in the future. He handled his Scarpia convincingly, ominously if elegantly, and his beautiful voice has a rare timbre and style. Rex Harrower's staging was competent and showed much preparation, although a few opportunities—the procession in the first act, the soprano's action around the Madonna, and her final plunge—missed out dramatically. Houston's local paper, which raved about the performances, described the Greek stage designer Andreas Nomikos as "the hero of the evening" for his uncommonly fine and inventive settings, especially the rich and harmonious conception of Scarpia's apartment, which contributed to the drama of the second act. The first and third acts were equally striking.

A worthy close to this brilliant season was the production of *La Traviata,* an engaging performance by any standards. The staging was elegant, the atmosphere romantic, and, above all, the singing excellent.

Katherine Fitzpatrick, a slim, statuesque blonde from the neighboring city of Shreveport, La., was a brilliant and fetching Violetta. She gave her role convincing characterization and strength, coloratura agility, and expressiveness. If the first and last acts were exclusively hers—though she had excellent support from David Poleri as Alfredo (who nevertheless seemed more at ease in the part of Cavaradossi the preceding week)—the second act was even more remarkable for the appearance of Philip Maero as the elder Germont. The favorable impression he had created as Scarpia was confirmed and enlarged by this role. Mr. Maero won the hearts of the audience not only with his glowing tone but also with his warm sincerity of his delivery. Lois Townsend and Guy Garner, two local singers, acquitted themselves well, and great praise was earned by conductor Walter Herbert for fine pacing, keen support, and the rich sound of the orchestra.

PAUL CRESTON'S *"Lydian Ode" was premiered by the Wichita Symphony Orchestra on Feb. 24. On the composer's left in the picture is* JAMES ROBERTSON, *conductor of the Wichita Symphony; on his right,* DR. M. M. TINTEROW, *member of the board of directors, who commissioned the work in memory of his sister, Shirley Claire Tinterow.*

Rex Harrower staged the work on a raked platform, which improved the sound and sidelines considerably. Imaginative sets by Andreas Nomikos had appropriate affinity to the music. All in all, this worthy closing performance, promising an even more brilliant future for the Houston Grand Opera, was a musical as well as scenic delight of the highest order.

TRUDY GOTH

## PHILADELPHIA

■ We have nothing against Carnegie Hall. But as a loyal Philadelphian we often wonder why this city's Academy of Music (its full name is American Academy of Music) does not enjoy the fame and prestige it deserves. It seats 3000 (that is, more than Carnegie Hall), and its acoustics are unequaled in this hemisphere. And, when the restoration committee finishes its job of refurbishing, it will once again rank as this country's No. 1 concert hall.

All this is a prelude to a look forward and backward. The forward look is to the changes in the building's appearance, which will take place over a period of several years. Modern plumbing and wiring, new curtains, paint inside and out, maybe even new seats—but not new acoustics! It would be impossible to duplicate this building today, since it was erected in the form of a sphere; domed roof and deep wells in the basement contribute so much to the ability to hear perfectly in any part of the house.

The building cost $250,000 originally, and a $1,500,000 re-conditioning job will begin in May. And here's where the backward look takes place, for the Academy marked its centenary on Jan. 26. (Get in line, folks—any other concert hall in America that old?) A centennial concert by the Philadelphia Orchestra and assorted guest stars was followed by a jubilee ball at the Sheraton Hotel, which did not open until early March but rushed the ballroom into usable condition. At an average of $100 a ticket, the upper strata in all walks of Philadelphia's life thought it a bargain and are still talking about the affair. The concert, incidentally, had Ormandy and Danny Kaye on the podium; Marian Anderson, Hilde Gueden, Artur Rubinstein, Dinah Shore, and Isaac Stern were in fine form. So was Danny.

The concert raised about $200,000 toward that million and a half.

Other stars off the classical music path also appeared with the Orchestra. Jack Benny did some amusing fiddling around and helped raise $50,000 in an Israel benefit conducted by Alfred Wallenstein. Richard Rodgers conducted a program of his own works in a Pension Foundation concert, with four vocal soloists.

Charles Munch, who heretofore had appeared occasionally with the Boston Symphony, worked some of his magic on the Philadelphia Orchestra in a weekend podium exchange with Eugene Ormandy. A belated PhilOrch "first" was Roussel's Third Symphony, a meaty work which made a strong impression. The French program also included the Love Scene from Berlioz's "Romeo and Juliet," Honegger's Second Symphony and Ravel's "Tomb of Couperin."

William Steinberg featured a well-proportioned "Eroica" Symphony on his guest program, and among soloists have been Benno Moiseiwitsch, in a virile performance of the "Emperor" Concerto, and Norman Carol, playing the Symphonie Espagnole with good taste and tone.

SAMUEL L. SINGER

## CLEVELAND

■ The American composer is coming into his own slowly but surely. During the past month several important programs were devoted to the works of our home talent, of the present as well as of the past. Important contributions to American music have been made by our own Cleveland composers; several of them enjoy international renown. To commemorate the centenary of the universally beloved James H. Rogers, composer of many beautiful songs, piano and organ works, two concerts were dedicated to Mr. Rogers' compositions. Arthur Shepherd, dean of Cleveland's composers, presided and paid tribute to this guiding spirit in Cleveland's incipient music life. As music critic of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, he was succeeded by another famous American composer, Herbert Elwell.

In a special program before the Fortnightly Musical Club, Prof. Karl Grossman of Western Reserve and conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra in this city, dwelt at length on the subject of Cleveland's famed musical sons, which also includes Charles V. Rychlik, Douglas Moore, and Rogers Sessions, as well as Ernest Bloch. The three latter personalities won their spurs while living and working in Cleveland for many years.

In the last Twilight concert before its Eastern tour, the Cleveland Orchestra under the baton of Robert Shaw performed American music by Charles Ives, Charles Griffes, and Aaron Copland. Louis Lane, able young Assistant Conductor of the orchestra, chose for his Twilight Concert an all-American program consisting of Paul Creston's Dance Overture, Gershwin's Symphonic Pictures of *Porgy and Bess*, as well as the "Rhapsody in Blue," which Mr. Lane conducted from the piano. The orchestra gave a stunning performance of Herbert Elwell's Suite from "The Happy Hypocrite" Ballet. The composer was recalled to the stage several times and was lavish in his praise for the excellent performance of his work. Lighter music from *The King and I* and *Carousel* concluded the program.

ROSE WIDDER

## BOSTON

■ Boston Symphony Orchestra patrons had the opportunity of comparing three markedly different styles of conducting in the 15th, 16th and 17th pairs of concerts on the Friday-Saturday subscription series.

Charles Munch's approach, based on deep and long study of the scores, but depending largely on fervency and enthusiasm brought to high point during the performance itself, led to thrilling results in the Strauss "Ein Heldenleben," which climaxed the concerts of Feb. 15-16. The conductor's deep understanding of the music was


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*Pictured above are newly elected officers of the Music Teachers National Assn. Left to right: vice-presidents* LA VAHN MAESCH, LELAND COON, *and* VIRGINIA FRANCE, *and president* DUANE HASKELL. *Other officers, not photographed, are vice-president Duane Branigan and recording secretary John Lowell.*

made evident by the way he brought out the inner voices and by the clarity of all the involved parts and subtle allusions, mostly lost in routine performances. But what made the reading altogether remarkable was the inspiration of the moment which swept the audience along together with conductor and players into a mutually shared experience which far transcended the sounds, magnificent as these were. For sheer spirit of performance this was the best "Heldenleben" within the memory of this reviewer.

Other items on the program included Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio* Overture and the same composer's Clarinet Concerto, with Gino Cioffi, the orchestra's principal clarinetist, playing with the beautiful tone for which he is famous.

Making guest appearances on Feb. 22-23, Igor Markevitch scored heavily with his audiences. Cool calculation resulting in a careful husbanding of resources achieved highly interesting interpretations marked by originality and logic. Yet this somewhat more cerebral approach also was exciting and moving throughout the varied, well-constructed program. The conductor's own arrangement for orchestra of Ricercar from the "Musical Offering" by Bach, a setting which does full justice to the original, was heard for the first time at these concerts. Another BSO "first," and long-delayed, was Schubert's youthful and charming Symphony No. 3, done with just the requisite lightness and deftness. The Strauss "Til Eulenspiegel" and Ravel's arrangement of the Moussorgsky "Pictures at an Exhibition," gave the conductor every opportunity to lead the virtuoso orchestra through its most virtuosic paces.

Eugene Ormandy was the third conductor, making his appearances Mar. 1, 2, in an exchange that sent Mr. Munch to Philadelphia at the same time to conduct Mr. Ormandy's splendid orchestra. With Mr. Ormandy, sound is the all-important factor. As he has shown repeatedly in nearby Worcester and in Boston itself he is pre-eminent when it comes to beautiful tone, flexibility and balance. Such a conductor, however, is a little at a disadvantage in a guest appearance, and there were a few moments when the orchestra could not meet the conductor's directions. But as a whole this concert too was an enjoyable experience. William Schuman's "Credendum" received its first BSO hearing and impressed as a rugged, powerful and sincerely motivated work. The Brahms Second and the Symphonic Suite from Hindemith's "Mathis der Maler" completed the list.

JULES WOLFFERS

## CHICAGO

■ Fritz Reiner and his orchestra were on their mettle temperamentally and technically at the first concert (Feb. 14) after his midseason vacation. Reiner had chosen some of the most dramatic and programmatic of symphonic literature—Beethoven's Overture to Egmont, Berlioz's Fantastic Symphony, and Hindemith's "Mathis der Maler." Though both works are within the symphonic frame, neither has the conventional musical content associated with the form. Reiner met both composers on their own terms, and produced a lavishly colored and musically imaginative performance of the Berlioz, and a reading of the Hindemith more discerning and tellingly detailed than any presentation of the work given us previously.

Rudolph Ganz' Symphonic Overture to an Unwritten Comedy "Laughter . . . Yet Love (premiered by Thor Johnson's orchestra in 1950) opened the following midweek concerts as a feature of the composer's 80th birthday celebration. Reiner and the orchestra gave a felicitous performance of the delightfully subtle, cleverly orchestrated work, and Ganz came on stage to acknowledge the audience's warm response, as svelt and alert as when he first stepped on Michigan Boulevard 56 years ago.

Bartok's Divertimento for String Orchestra, given a welcome first performance at these concerts, preceded Eugene Istomin's solo appearance in the Mozart Concerto No. 9 for Piano and Orchestra (K. 271). This was a happy performance, for Mr. Istomin is one of the top talents of his generation, and has the musical understanding, the beautifully cultivated tone, and complete technic to make him a worthy interpreter of Mozart.

The Feb. 28 concert was an especially rewarding one for Hanson's "Elegy to the Memory of Serge Koussevitzky," beautifully played, a shining performance of Haydn's Symphony No. 103, and the Brahms Concerto for Violin and Violincello, elequently performed by John Weicher and Janos Starker, with Reiner and his men completely *en rapport.*

■ The Fromm Music Foundation in cooperation with The University of Chicago, De Paul University and Roosevelt University, presented Joseph Szigeti, violinist, and Carlo Bussotti,


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pianist, in a series of three concerts at the Goodman Theatre of the Art Institute Feb. 18, 25 and 26. Eleven sonatas by masters of the 20th century comprised the three programs that drew large and discriminating audiences. Composers represented were Vaughan Williams (whose Sonata in A Minor was given a first performance), Hindemith, Stravinsky, Bloch, Busoni, Debussy, Bartok, Honegger, Prokofieff, Ives, and Ravel.


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■ A baritone of quality is the debonair Theodore Charles Stone, who brought to Fullerton Hall one of the largest audiences seen there this season. The personable Stone, who has many appearances to his credit, brought to the fore his knowledge of various styles represented on his program, clear diction of several languages employed, and interpretative taste that made his handling of operatic excerpts from Handel's *Rinaldo, Ptolemy,* and *Judas Maccabaeus,* and Haydn's "Spirit Song" an object of admiration. And praise must be given this serious singer-musician for his fine conception of Lied by Schubert.

■ Marian Anderson gave her annual recital in Orchestra Hall on Feb. 23, assisted by her accompanist Franz Rupp. If songs of Purcell and Scarlatti served to warm her voice to its former vocal estate, the remaining half of the diva's program—Haydn, Schubert, and Massenet's "Pleurez mes yeux" from *Le Cid,* gave us unalloyed joy. The program also contained a group of songs in English by Scott, Britten, Dvorak, and Quilter, and Negro Spirituals.

■ Lyric Opera of Chicago has announced its 1957 season premiere performance of Verdi's *Otello* on Oct. 11 at Civic Opera House. The opera, starring Renata Tebaldi, Mario del Monaco and Tito Gobbi, is scheduled for several performances during the seven-week season (Oct. 10 to Nov. 30).

■ Louis Sudler, who sang for President and Mrs. Eisenhower at the Inaugural Ball at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington in January on a televised program carried over NBC and CBS networks, was also invited to sing on the program (Feb. 24) inaugurating the Rudolph Ganz Recital Hall, located atop the famous Auditorium Theatre in Chicago.

■ Sonia Sharnova was the speaker for the meeting of the Wisconsin Chapter of NATS on Feb. 17. On Feb. 27, she opened the series of public lectures sponsored by The Music Institute of The College of Jewish Studies. Her subject was "The Golden Age of Opera in Chicago."

■ Cara Verson made a guest appearance at the Cordon Club in the Fine Arts Building on March 8, playing a group of Debussy, a Suite by Malipiero, the Bartok Scherzo, and a Cradle Song and "Three Etudes in the Form of a Sonatine" by Fernandez.

DOSHA DOWDY and RENÉ DEVRIES

*Soprano* MARY BOTHWELL *presents to* DR. PETER WILHOUSKY, *Director of Music for the N. Y. Board of Education, recordings of "The Mary Bothwell Show," heard weekly on Station WAAT, Newark. The recordings, featuring interviews with well-known musicians, will be used in music classes in the public schools.*

## CINCINNATI

■ The 15th pair of concerts of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (Feb. 15, 16) opened with a sonorous performance of the grandiose and somber Prelude in E-flat by Shostakovich, and was followed by a magnificent reading of his First Symphony on the part of musical director Thor Johnson. In none of his works has Shostakovich spoken with such forthright fervor and dramatic feeling as in this early work. Dr. Johnson's fondness for the Shostakovich First was particularly evident in the sensuously threnodic second movement. The second half of the program belonged to Wagner and Eileen Farrell. It is no news that Miss Farrell is the possessor of one of the most glorious voices of our generation. She has everything—magnificence, power, drama, warmth, projection, and infinite nuance—but each time she sings, the wondrous gift of her talent and art comes as a revelation to the listener. Through her sumptuous singing, the Wesendonck Songs and the Immolation Scene from *Die Goetterdaemmerung* became living theater of unlimited appeal, despite some lapses on the part of the orchestra.

When Lukas Foss premiered his own piano concerto in Cincinnati several years back, he all but committed mayhem on his instrument. Upon his second appearance with the orchestra on Feb. 22, 23, it was an entirely different story. His Bach D Minor Piano Concerto was crisply played, with an admirable mixture of fire and tension; the Mozart G Major Piano Concerto (K. 453) was admirable in every way—precise and distinct, but with a personal blend of the lighter and darker emotions which enhanced the work's already inherent beauties. For the program's novelty, Dr. Johnson


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presented the world premiere of Six Variations on a Sarabande of J.S. Bach by Fritz Manczyk, a member of the Cincinnati Orchestra's 'cello section. The Variations are eclectic in style, recalling at various times the Impressionists and at other times the Post-Romanticists, and were not always capable of retaining the listener's undivided attention.

■ A program by the internationally renowned LaSalle String Quartet, now resident in Cincinnati, is always an occasion for rejoicing, no matter what it plays. As a novelty of its program on Feb. 12, the LaSalle Quartet presented Beethoven's Quartet in F Major (Op. 14, No. 1), which the composer had transcribed from his earlier piano sonata of the same opus number. The existence of this version has been known to scholars through references to it in Beethoven's letters, but since it was not included in the Complete Edition of the composer's works and has been out of print since its publication over 50 years ago, it has remained almost unknown. The LaSalle Quartet, after

*Luigi Cherubini's* Medea *has provided* EILEEN FARRELL *with one of her most outstanding operatic roles. In Cincinnati recently, where she sang with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Miss Farrell visited the Art Museum to admire the portrait of this great composer.*

many attempts to obtain a copy of the parts through music dealers around the world, finally found what they were seeking in the Fine Arts Department of the Cincinnati Public Library. The music had been there all the time!

In making the quartet arrangement, Beethoven actually recomposed the whole piece, adding authority and meaning to every measure. Naturally, in the hands of the LaSalle Quartet, the "new" Beethoven Quartet in F Major received just the right treatment it needed to make it an interesting if not overwhelming addition to the chamber music repertoire. The program's high spot for many listeners was another first Cincinnati performance, the Quartetto Lirico No. 3 by Matyas Seiber, a Hungarian composer now living in London. The outside movements enclose a chaotic second movement, whose main purpose seems to be to display jerky fragments of ideas played by each instrument. Everything turned out satisfactorily in the Dvorak "American" Quartet, which the ensemble gave with the same impeccable taste that they impart to everything they play.

LOUIS JOHN JOHNEN

## LOUISVILLE, KY.

■ The Louisville Orchestra was in fine fettle at the fifth subscription concert (Feb. 20). Robert Whitney conducted with masterly musicianship, the program was interesting and off the beaten track, there was a fine soloist. All the components of a successful concert were there, but the audience did not fill the house as usual, for reasons unknown to this reviewer, who thinks that all those who did not come really missed something.

A suite for string orchestra by Arcangelo Corelli arranged by Ettore Pinelli and consisting of three movements from the composer's violin sonatas was the opening number. The strings sounded beautiful, mellow, and at times brilliant. Alice Ehlers was the soloist in Haydn's harpsichord concerto in D Major. She revived this charming work with classical simplicity and crystalline translucency, with liveliness and zest in the fast movements, and with warmth in the Adagio. Robert Whitney and the orchestra gave a very well balanced support. David Van Vactor's Fantasia, Chaconne and Allegro, commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra, received its world premiere. A comparatively short work, yet packed with ingenious details developed by changes of the rhythmic pattern from a chromatic theme of 12 notes, but devoid of atonal character, it is an attractive piece of music, neither boring nor puzzling to the listener. It may well be one of the best new compositions the orchestra has laid its hands on lately. The composer was present to acknowledge a well-deserved, warm applause. The evening closed with John Powell's Symphony in A, heard for the first time in Louisville. Folk songs and country dances, mostly from the composer's native Virginia, are the materials woven together into an appealing and colorful texture. That one is reminded of Brahms' musical language here and there does not detract from the excellence of the work nor from the pleasure derived from listening to it. The audience made this clear to the composer, the conductor and the orchestra with hearty applause.

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PHILIPPE ENTREMONT, *22-year-old French piano virtuoso whose recent sold-out U.S. tour aroused nationwide acclaim, was flown from Europe by the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington, D.C., to appear with the Orchestra on Feb. 12 and 13 in the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto under Howard Mitchell's baton.*

RAY DUDLEY, *24-year-old Canadian pianist, recently left for a 70-concert European tour, starting in Brussels and ending April 12 in Lisbon. He returns to play with the N.Y. Philharmonic May 4 under Mitropoulos. On June 8 he is scheduled to appear with the London Symphony.*

# THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

## NAPLES

■ After its inaugural *Falstàff*, the San Carlo's opera season has offered a series of interesting, if not always completely successful productions. In spite of diminishing government subsidies, the direction of the great Naples house has managed to assemble a number of excellent singers and to mount several new (or "new for Naples") works, as well as offer laudable versions of a number of the standard repertory operas.

Italian opera theatres are more or less obligated to stage some work or works by contemporary Italian composers in the course of every season; there are several interesting composers working in Italy now, but unfortunately they do not write enough operas to go round, and—in the case of Dallapiccola, notably—the operas they *do* write are frequently rejected in favor of duller, "safer" works by composers with some kind of official position. The San Carlo's deference to this tradition was manifested this year by the production of an opera called *Monte Ivnor* by Maestro Lodovico Rocca, the director of the Turin Conservatory. Musically, the opera was exactly what one would expect from a cultivated man, head of an important musical institution. Though much of the work seemed to derive from *Boris Gudonov*, there were also plenty of references to the classics of this century: Debussy, Puccini, and of course, the composer's master, Pizzetti. It was all discreet, but for the most part boring.

In spite of its discretion, the opera was virtually banned for many years after its first performance (Rome, 1939); but the reason for this exclusion is to be found in its libretto, which is drawn from Franz Werfel's Novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. Cesare Meano's adaptation, however, lacks the novel's drama and indignation.

The production was excellent in general, and one couldn't help wishing that the same effort had been lavished in a worthier cause. Armando La Rosa Parodi is a tasteful conductor, who wrung what he could out of the turgid score. Giuseppe Taddei and Leyla Gencer sang the principal roles with fervor; Giorgio Algorta was a stately High Priest. Though the staging posed many problems (the opera abounds in "effects," choruses offstage, etc.), the director Livio Luzzato moved the masses intelligently, and C. M. Cristini's sets were appropriately grim. Alas, they conveyed all too well the tone of the opera.

Eugene Conley sang on the opening night of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which I was unfortunately unable to attend. Conley thereafter succumbed to Italy's changeable winter weather, caught a cold, and was substituted by Juan Oncina, who was not at all in good form. Especially in the two big airs in Act One, Oncina's voice was pinched and nasal. In fact, none of the singers in this production was entirely at ease; and yet, partly because of Parodi's sprightly conducting, and partly simply because of the irrepressible charm of Rossini's music, the evening was an entertaining one. After some uncertainty in the First Act, Ettore Bastianini worked into his role and gave an assured performance, though I still feel his big, dark baritone voice is more suited to dramatic parts. The American Gianna D'Angelo was a pert and pretty Rosina, though her voice is not completely sure, especially in the lower notes, and she did not make much of an effort to trill. "Bel raggio lusinghier," for this reason, seemed an unwise choice for the Lesson Scene, though Miss D'Angelo is clearly a good musician and a promising performer. Renato Capecchi was a Bartolo thoroughly at home in his role. And the Berta of Amalia Pini deserves a special mention.

The *Barbiere* sets and production were familiar from past seasons, but the *Alceste*, which followed, was completely new. Actually the sets and the stage-direction were the least attractive aspects of this highly interesting and moving performance; Cristini again created scenes that were more grim than grand, and Tatiana Pavlova, apparently afraid that the music was too static, invented constant and distracting goings-on for the corps de ballet and the supers, including an interminable ring-around-the-rosey, where the rustle of paper flowers became nearly unbearable.

But the opera itself triumphed over these production flaws. Mario Rossi is perhaps the Italian conductor most sensitive to the stately, flowing Gluck score. He is a man of learning, but there was nothing pedantic about his easy, yet firm handling of the music; he created a wonderful and coherent performance. In this, he was ably assisted by the tenor Mirto Picchi, who is again one of the few Italian tenors who can sing non-Italian opera. He has a feeling for the Gluck line, plus secure intonation and a voice that is stirring. In the title role, America's Anne McKnight (who is called here Anna De' Cavalieri) was not always satisfactory. The middle of her voice has a beautiful, rich sound, which tends to grow thin as it moves too far up or down. She sang "Divinités du Styx" correctly, but without converying much of Alceste's emotion to the listeners; happily, the slow section of her big Act II finale lay perfectly for her, and she sang it very movingly. She was always elegant in her gestures and poised, despite the not infrequent absurdities of the staging. One of the features by which a Gluck opera performance stands or falls is the chorus; and in this instance, the San Carlo chorus showed that it is capable of rising nobly to the occasion.

The revival of *Don Pasquale* was just about as close to perfect as a production can come, and it was clearly the big popular success of the Naples season so far. Though Luca Crippa's sets were perhaps a bit *too* decorated, they were colorful and lighthearted and in keeping with the rest of the staging, which director Alessandro Brissoni allowed to relax and follow the bent of the singers, all of them accomplished actors. Fernando Corena is, if anything, even better known in America than he is here; suffice it to say of him that he was in splendid form in the title role. Renato Capecchi was an excellent foil, as a dandified Doctor Malatesta. Gianni Raimondi, whom I had heard heretofore only in romantic roles, sang beautifully and gave a wonderfully droll, underplayed parody of the romantic opera hero. Rosanna Carteri's voice is a little hard, from time to time, but she is an expert performer, so her lively acting and sure singing won her ample applause, from a thoroughly entertained public. Francesco Molinari Pradelli, the conductor, was also called before the curtain many times—deservedly, since his lively pace added considerably to the general success of the opera.

Until a few seasons ago it was common practice here to perform most of the works of Wagner in Italian translation—a practice which many Wagner lovers, the undersigned included, regarded as an abomination. Now that practice has more or less been superseded by the custom of inviting German companies to come to Italy and perform German operas in the original language (usually with the local chorus singing in Italian). This innovation is, alas, not such an improvement as one might think, since the quality of the German companies invited varies radically, and one often feels that we could find better conductors and better singers in Italy. In fact, this was my feeling at the performance of *Die Meistersinger*, which Fritz Rieger conducted at the San Carlo with a predominantly German cast. The San Carlo orchestra is able to play Wagner's music impressively and sensitively, as past performances there have amply proved, but Rieger made the orchestra sound like a village band. The Overture was tinny and sluggish, and throughout the opera there was no drama infused in the music, no *chiaroscuro*. Though some of the singing was good (notably the melting Eva of Sena Jurinac), most of it was routine, and the Walther von Stolzing of Bernard Aldenhoff was impossible: off-pitch, whining, breathy. Otto Wiener was a decorous Sachs, but without the imposing stage presence or voice necessary for the role. Benno Kusche went through the motions as Beckmesser. Of the male singers only Gerhard Unger, as David, made real musical capital of his role. WILLIAM WEAVER


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## PARIS

■ Two important revivals took place when the two National Lyric Theatres were united, following a new policy by the administrator, Mr. Hirsch. Both won the favor of press and public. At the Opéra *The Damnation of Faust* was staged partly with scenery consisting of luminous projections, something we have seen already, but now very much improved; partly in solid settings which were entirely new. Some of the projections were excellent. The staging of the tavern scene by Auerbach, in which the mixed choral groups wore colorful costumes, evoked the pictures of the Flemish masters and was highly applauded. A new tenor, Paul Finel, made a promising debut. He has a strong voice, beautiful in the medium range, and his diction is perfect. His Faust had noble presence. The bass, Savignol, gave a real Mephistophelean outline to his part, and Rita Gorr was an expressive Marguerite. The orchestra, directed by Louis Fourtestier, was, as usual, magnificent. An especial compliment goes to the chorus.

■ The revival of *Cosi Fan Tutte* at the Opéra Comique did honor to this distinguished place. A rare unity of musical and stage direction assured homogeneity of style. Especially deserving of praise is the discipline of the ensemble, which is so important in this difficult work; duets, quartets, quintets, etc., were interpreted with unusual tenderness and delicacy of nuance. Conductor George Sebastian obviously gave the work a loving preparation, and was rewarded by a resounding success which all the interpreters shared—Jacqueline Brumaire, as the expert Fiordiligi, and the Mmes. Desmoutiers and Renaux in the other distaff parts, and the male trio, Giraudeau, Noguera, and Froumenty. The French adaptation of the text and the staging of Mr. Hirsch were successful. The settings of Bertin, though not very original, were nice to look at.

SUZANNE DEMARQUEZ

## TORONTO

■ January and February saw Paul Scherman and Boyd Neel take the podium at Massey Hall to conduct the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in subscription concerts. Permanent conductor Susskind is already following the pattern established by the successful ones of his profession on this continent by doing mid-season guest appearances with other orchestras. Victor Feldbrill has conducted most of the recent Pop concerts, and outstanding among the large roster of soloists


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has been Leopold Simoneau. Mischa Elman played the Mendelssohn early in January with the orchestra, and although not in top form, still revealed much of his seasoned wizardry—and the Elman tone.

■ Most exciting in the past few weeks has been the glut of chamber music. The Vienna Octet played their usual program (Beethoven and Schubert) at the Eaton Auditorium; the Parlow Quartet, a Canadian group led by the distinguished Kathleen Parlow, and the Quartetto Italiano, each in three concerts at the Royal Conservatory. The Italians were singularly beautiful in Debussy and the Mozart D Minor, and at no point in their three consecutive evenings (all different programs) were they less than very good. Surely the Quartetto Italiano is a phenomenon in ensemble, accuracy, blending of sound, and unanimity of interpretation. But one wants more heart, fire, abandon than the group is giving now or may be able to give. However, this is a young quartet with so many assets to its credit already, that it should grow in this last, but all-important department, with each succeeding year.

EZRA SCHABAS


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## Open Letter to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

AN old friend is writing these few words to you, one who had planned to visit again this winter the haunts of fond memories from twenty years ago, to participate personally in the celebration of your Jubilee. These are memories of the stirring winter 1936-37, when I had the privilege of witnessing the overwhelming enthusiasm of your people, when music of the most exalted kind was firmly implanted on the soil of Israel. It has been a keen disappointment that, owing to the events of the last fateful months, I had to forego plans to greet all those who are still maintaining the high standard of symphonic music in that troubled part of the world. Never during those twenty years have I ceased watching with respect and admiration the development and achievements of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, which continues to give concerts with the same fervor, though the country itself has been undergoing some of the most trying times of its existence.

It has been twenty years since I first set foot in Israel, after a boat trip of four days from Brindisi to Haifa. (Now the same distance is covered by air in a matter of hours.) There were a number of musicians aboard who had just escaped from Hitler's terror, men and women who wanted to settle, to live, to work in that new country that seemed so far away. One of them voiced to me his concerns about his future life in Israel. But, he added, "God and Mr. Huberman are going to help me."

On the very evening of our arrival the first rehearsal of Brahms' Second Symphony was held in the Concert Hall of the Levant Fair. Toscanini conducted, and Israel came to know what generosity, faith, and the human compassion of a great gentile musician was willing to do for the solace and elevation of the persecuted. When Bronislaw Huberman had asked Toscanini in New York to contribute his services through a benefit concert in that city for the young Israel Philharmonic, the Maestro said tersely: "That will not help much. It is better if I come over myself."

And he did. There was the Festival opening on December 26th, with Rossini and Brahms, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Weber, all music dear to the Maestro's heart. The Rector of Jerusalem University, Judah Magnes, proclaimed the event the greatest in the new history of Israel. Then followed the repetitions of the program for the workers, the concerts in Jerusalem and Haifa, the triumphal tours throughout the country. The audiences glowed with love and respect for the Maestro, who at the height of his fame had assumed this taxing work in such a magnificently selfless spirit. "I am a Catholic," he said on the night of his leave-taking at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, "and I have been taught to help my fellowmen when they need me." And there was the feverish work of organization in the small and crowded offices of the budding orchestra; and there was Bronislaw Huberman, the Founder, whose courage, belief, consecration, and unfailing optimism were so largely responsible for the creation of a home for his uprooted fellow musicians.

I learned about the Tel Aviv woman who had given to her newborn twin daughters the names of Tosca and Nini; about the beauty shop that refused to accept payment from Madame Toscanini because it was an honor to serve her. I was accosted by simple people on the street who stammered in a mixture of German, Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew: "Could you not help me to get a ticket?" Construction work on nearby buildings stopped during rehearsal hours, because the workers did not want to disturb the Maestro with the noise of their hammering. Instead, they would listen to the music that poured through the windows of old, battered Exhibition Hall.

A new concert hall is being erected in Tel Aviv, one of the finest and most modern in the world. And it is rapidly being brought to completion, despite the war, despite Gaza and Aqaba, despite the grave political responsibilities and decisions the country now faces.

I am sure that on January 16th, when radio and newspapers carried the dark news of Toscanini's death, the whole of Israel felt a shock of sorrow and personal loss. In these twenty years a generation has grown up that knows the figure of the Maestro only as legend. But as a legend he will be beloved as an image of a great past, and coming generations will be taught to know him as long as there is music in Israel. But no one will remember him with greater thankfulness than those musicians who can still remember the days when the Maestro rekindled, with them, the flame of Music, a flame which Israel, as long as it lives, will never allow to be extinguished. GISELLA SELDEN-GOTH

*Celebrated composer* GIAN-CARLO MENOTTI *photographed aboard the* S.S. Christoforo Colombo, *en route to Naples to organize the Festival of the Two Worlds.*

## GERMANY

■ January and February mark the climax of the annual German opera season. Travelling during these weeks through West Germany one often does not know where to go first. The present repertory of German opera houses makes the decision even more difficult than before.

At the Hamburg Staatsoper Heinz Tietjen has now firmly established his new reign, though we are still waiting for the more interesting premieres he has announced for the 1956-57 season, like Alban Berg's *Lulu*, Milhaud's *Christophe Colombe*, and the Wieland Wagner production of *Carmen*. So far *Wozzeck* has been revived, new productions of *Don Pasquale*, *A Masked Ball*, and Strauss' *Capriccio* (under Keilberth) have been added to the repertory, while *Boris Godunov* and *Parsifal* have been promised as the next premieres.

Main object of concentration during the first part of the season was the completion of Günter Rennert's Ring production, which received its first Hamburg postwar full-cycle performance about the middle of January. Collaborating with Helmut Jürgens as designer, Rennert aimed for a reconciliation between the primarily theatrical and the more purely philosophical aspects of the work; the result was a rarely satisfactory compromise without any compelling overall conception. Musically the performances were adequate rather than distinguished. Conducted by Leopold Ludwig, they were sung by Martha Mödl (Brünnhilde), Helene Werth (Sieglinde), Maria von Ilosvay (Friska), James Pease (Wotan), Hans Beirer (Siegfried), Walter Geisler (Siegmund), and Arnold van Mill (Hunding, Fafner, and Hagen).

■ Düsseldorf-Duisburg are continuing their operatic concubinage and its offspring is inevitably stamped by the mark of promiscuity. After the four inauguration premieres (*Elektra*, *Falstaff*, Orff's *Bernaunerin*, and Lortzing's *Wildschütz* — which were anything but a revelation), the standard of performances has suffered a steady decline, and the following premieres (*Parsifal*, *Tristan*, *Fledermaus*, and a ballet-bill consisting of Debussy's "Jeux," Francaix' "Les Demoiselles de la nuit," and "Petrouchka") have been torn to pieces by the local press. Rehearsals are now in progress for a new *Zauberflöte*, Janacek's *The Makropoulos Affair*, and Giselher Klebe's Schiller opera *The Robbers*, while expectations are especially high for the new *Don Carlos*, which will have an all-Italian artistic staff with Alberto Erede at the helm.

I have personally seen a performance of the ballet program, which was, indeed, an unbelievable display of coarseness and choreographic incompetence; a performance of "Pelleas and Melisande" which maintained an astonishingly high artistic level throughout (with Vilma Georgiou, who has embarked on quite a career in Düsseldorf, as an amiable Yniold; Randolph Symonette, as the menacing Golaud, and Guus Hockman, from Amsterdam, an authoritative Arkel); another scenically and musically rather poor performance of Strauss' *Ariadne*, saved through two attractive female voices: Ilse Hollweg, who sang her (to record-fans) well-known lithe and infectious Zerbinette, and Hildegard Hillebrecht in the title role, who exhibited a voluminous soprano spinto of unusually pleasing timbre, capable of covering a wide range of emotions —indeed, Miss Hillebrecht was for me the one discovery of my trip to Düsseldorf. The new *Tristan* had the advantage of André Cluytens in the pit (though even he could not make one forget that this is only a third-rate orchestra), but little to recommend the proceedings on stage, which were dominated by Christel Goltz (Isolde), Hanna Ludwig (Brangäne), Rudolf Lustig (Tristan), Otto Wiener (Kurwenal), and Walter Kreppel (Marke). (By the way: people in Düsseldorf told me of the enormous success American tenor Robert Russell enjoys in nearby Cologne where he sings Don Carlos and Canio.) HORST KOEGLER


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# SCHOOL NEWS

By GID W. WALDROP

## COLLEGE PRODUCTIONS AND FESTIVALS

■ Cornell University will hold its 11th Festival of Contemporary Arts April 10-24, with Aaron Copland, composer, and James T. Farrell, novelist, among the guest speakers.

■ The West Virginia All-State College Symphony Orchestra gave its eighth annual concert at the West Virginia University School of Music in Morgantown on Feb. 21. The conductor was Guy Fraser Harrison, Musical Director of the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra. The program, which featured American music, included the Symphony No. 3 by Paul Creston, Adagio for Strings by Samuel Barber, and "Smoky Mountain Holiday" by Benjamin Duford.

■ An opera double-bill of Ravel's *The Child and the Apparitions* ("L'Enfant et les Sortilèges") and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, will be given three performances at Juilliard Concert Hall.

■ On Mar. 16 The Saturday Consort will be presented by the Fine Arts Department of Carnegie Institute in Gallery A in the last of a series of four concerts. Works by Bach, Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Marcello, and George Phillip Telemann will be performed. The public, which has been accustomed to hear many of these early compositions in their transcribed forms, will hear the original instruments for which these composers wrote.

■ Augusta Scheiber, a member of the piano faculty of the Chatham Square Music School, New York, will perform in recital at the School, Thursday evening, April 11th, 1957, at 8:00 p.m. The recital will be open to the public. Mrs. Scheiber, a pupil of Director Samuel Chotzinoff and Wanda Landowska, has appeared on numerous occasions in Town Hall, and most recently in Central America.

■ A full-scale production of Bizet's *Carmen* was staged by the Northwestern University Opera Workshop on Feb. 27 and Mar. 1. The opera was sung in English by a different cast each evening. Costumes for the production were from the permanent collection of the Chicago Civic Opera House. Musical director was Eugene Dressler, associate professor of voice in the school, and Herman Felber of the school faculty conducted the performance.

■ *Susannah*, by Carlisle Floyd, will be given its West Coast premiere by the School of Music of the University of Southern California on April 5, 7, and 10 in Bovard Auditorium on the S. C. campus.

At its New York premiere last fall, *Susannah* was hailed as one of the most important musical events of the year. Floyd, who is a native of South Carolina and is only 30, is planning to attend the S. C. premiere performance. Walter Ducloux, head of the opera department, will conduct and direct. John Blankenchip of the drama department will create the settings and costumes.

■ The Dalcroze School of Music, New York, will present its annual faculty concert for the benefit of the Dalcroze Fund on March 22 at 8:45 p.m. in the Dalcroze Auditorium at 161 East 73rd Street.

■ A most successful performance of *Armide* by the Hartt Opera-Theatre Guild of the Julius Hartt Musical Foundation, Hartford, Conn., drew a near capacity audience on Feb. 9. This performance marked the American premiere in English, with adaptation by John Gutman of the Metropolitan Opera Company. The entire production was staged and designed by Dr. Elmer Nagy. Dr. Moshe Paranov was the musical director.

Georgette Crochiere was cast in the title role, Benjamin Thomas sang Hidroat, and Charles May, the Rinaldo. Following the performance, Mr. Gutman, associate manager of the Metropolitan, lauded the Hartt College of Music for its varied operatic repertoire. He mentioned particularly the high quality of the *Armide* performance. The production marked the Hartt Opera-Theatre Guild's 15th Anniversary program. Since 1942, the organization has produced a great variety of operatic works.

On May 1, 2, 3, and 4, the Guild will present the first operatic adaptation of one of James Thurber's fables, *The Unicorn in the Garden*, with music by Russell Smith. Paired with the Smith production will be *Philemon and Baucis* by Charles Gounod.

*Scene from Hartt College production of Gluck's* Armide

## FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

■ Prof. Craig McHenry of Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York, has been appointed dean of its 65-year-old School of Music. Dean McHenry succeeds Conrad H. Rawski, who will engage in study and research at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

■ The Beaux Arts Trio will be in residence at the Indiana University School of Music during the coming summer session, Dean Wilfred C. Bain has announced. Members of the trio—

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■ Dr. Ernst von Dohnanyi, noted composer-pianist, will be Guest Professor at the School of Music, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, for two weeks beginning Mar. 18.

■ The Music Associates of Aspen have announced the following appointments to the faculty of the Music School for the 1957 season: Eudice Shapiro to the violin faculty; James Chambers, first chair player in the French horn section of the New York Philharmonic, to the horn faculty; and George Gaber to teach percussion.

## CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Ward Davenny, Director of the Cleveland Institute of Music, announces that auditions for the **Beryl Rubinstein Scholarship** in the field of voice will be held on Saturday, May 4, at The Cleveland Institute of Music. The Beryl Rubinstein Scholarship has been established in memory of the late Director of The Cleveland Institute of Music. Each year the Scholarship is awarded in a different field of applied music or composition, with primary consideration given to promise of conspicuous ability. The Scholarship for 1957-58 will be awarded to the most gifted voice applicant and covers the total cost of tuition for a Bachelor of Music or Master of Music candidate at the Institute. Write to the Cleveland Institute of Music, 3411 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland 15, Ohio, for an application, which must be returned no later than April 20, 1957.

■ An unusual contest, designed to provide recognition for professional violin makers of all countries, has been announced in conjunction with the **Third International Henryk Wieniawski Violin Competition** for young virtuosos to be held in Poland this year. The new competition is scheduled to take place in Poznan from Nov. 1 to 15, 1957. Five prizes are offered for the best new violins made in 1956 or 1957. Winners may request that the prize be paid in the currency of their own country at the official rate of exchange. First prize in U.S. currency will be worth $1,000.

Copies of the detailed rules governing entries in either the violin-making or the Wieniawski Violin Competition may be obtained through the Embassy of the Polish People's Republic, 2640 16th St., N.W., Washington 9, D.C.

■ The Illinois Federation of Music Clubs announces a **Vachel Lindsay Composition Contest.** A $500 cash prize will be given for the work considered most outstanding. The contest is open to all American composers regardless of age. The contestant must have resided in the continental U. S. for at least one year prior to the announcement of this contest. Applicants should apply to Robert Mueller, Illinois Chairman, American Composition, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois. Entries must be postmarked before midnight, August 1, 1957.

### Markevitch To Direct Conducting Course in Mexico

The Mexican Institute of Fine Arts is establishing the first Panamerican Course in Orchestra Conducting under the personal direction of Maestro Igor Markevitch, who directs similar courses in Salzburg. The organization, methods, and program of the courses are based on those of this important European musical center. Assisting Mr. Markevitch will be Volker Wangenheim from Berlin. The course will run from May 20th to June 25th. Further information may be obtained by writing the Secretary of the Panamerican Course in Orchestra Conducting, Departamento de Musica, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico, D. F. Mexico.

### American Music Symposium At Illinois Wesleyan

William Bergsma and Ernst Krenek will be guest composers during the Contemporary American Music Symposium to be presented on May 14 and 15, 1957, at Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Ill. This Symposium represents the School of Music's sixth annual contribution to the University's Contemporary Arts Festival.

Last year Ernst Krenek, while in Europe, developed the longest electronic work to date. His 17-minute Easter Oratorio was composed directly onto tape in the Cologne radio laboratories. He will present and discuss this work at the Wesleyan Symposium.

William Bergsma is presently teaching at the Juilliard School of Music. His choral work, "Riddle Me This," commissioned by Wesleyan's Collegiate Choir, will be performed by that choir during the Symposium. Bergsma's opera, *Wife of Martin Guerre,* was recently premiered at Juilliard, and his Third String Quartet is to be released on Columbia records.

The Symposium will include student and faculty performances of compositions by Krenek and Bergsma. Compositions by students and faculty of Illinois Wesleyan will also be performed during the Symposium.

This year's Festival of Contemporary Arts is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Frank R. Bohnhorst, who initiated and directed Wesleyan's Symposium for its first five years.

### Auditions Scheduled for Berkshire Music Center

Auditions will be held in Carnegie Recital Hall, New York, on Friday, March 22, from 2-5 p.m. for instrumentalists who wish to apply for instruction in orchestral and chamber music performance at the Berkshire Music Center. The Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer school at Tanglewood, Lenox, Mass., will hold its 15th session from July 1st to August 11th, concurrently with the Berkshire Festival of the Orchestra.

Applicants accepted in the Berkshire Music Center student orchestra are eligible for tuition grants from the Tanglewood Revolving Scholarship Fund. Those planning to attend the auditions should, if possible, notify the Registrar of the Berkshire Music Center, Symphony Hall, Boston 15, Mass.

### Podolsky Scores Success At Los Angeles Conservatory

The recent series of Podolsky Master Classes inaugurated by the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music and Arts last October, has proved so successful and created so much interest among the students of the Conservatory, that they requested permission to attend these classes in addition to their regular classes on History and Literature of Music. The classes were originally etablished for busy teachers, but the students of the Conservatory "got wind" of what was going on. So Dean Arthur Wolf made it possible for the students of the Conservatory as well as High School Seniors to take the classes and receive credit.

The classes will continue for the third series during the last two weeks of April. At this time Dr. Podolsky will lecture on the music of the contemporary period, devoting one entire session to "color and pedal technique for the contemporary idiom on the modern piano." Dr. Podolsky has also been invited to hold "Piano Sessions With Leo Podolsky" June 27-28 at the Conservatory.

### U.C.E. Publication Agreement

The University Composers Exchange, with headquarters at Valparaiso (Ind.) University, has announced that the six-year-old group has reached a publication agreement with the Summy Publishing Company of Chicago. The text of the agreement reads: "Subject to the recommendation of the executive committee of UCE and the editorial board of the Summy Company, Summy's will publish three compositions in a UCE series selected from the works performed at the yearly festival. This arrangement, which was very graciously initiated by Summy, links UCE with a publishing firm noted for its far-sighted editorial policy."

The University Composers Exchange was founded in 1950 and has grown to include 90 composers from the majority of the schools in the Midwest. Started on the Valparaiso University campus, the group's active membership now reaches as far as Kansas and Missouri to the west, and Ohio to the east. Primary purpose of the UCE is to promote the exchange of works and ideas among the leading university composers in the Midwest.

# THE DANCE

By ROSALYN KROKOVER

■ It is always good to have Ballet Theatre back, even if for only one performance. The only New York appearance of the company took place on Feb. 10 at the Metropolitan Opera. It was a gala occasion, with flags of various nations and of the UN decorating the boxes.

The program contained three familiar works and a novelty, *Winter's Eve,* choreographed by Kenneth MacMillan to Benjamin Britten's "Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge"; scenery and costumes by Nicholas Georgiadis. This is a talented and rather preposterous piece of work. To quote the program: "A young man meets a girl and, not knowing that she is blind, takes her to a ballroom. Eventually she cannot keep up the pretense and gives herself away. She leaves in distress; the young man follows; they struggle and by accident she blinds him. They are separated by the crowd and are unable to find each other."

Even forgetting about the lack of taste implicit in such a story, the ballet itself contains more effects than choreographic imagination. The effects themselves are ingenious. At one point, before a black curtain, MacMillan has managed things so that the blind girl is dancing with a group of fluttering pigeons. But, one feels the effect came first and the dancing was built around it; it is a false piece of symbolism; and even falser when it is repeated; and in reality unnecessary to the plot.

As for dance proper, there are conventional patterns of search, waltzing, and so on. MacMillan does have ideas but they are short-winded and not capable, apparently, of full development. Two dancers share the major load; there are some minor roles and a corps de ballet, but they don't do much. Nora Kaye and John Kriza took the leads, dancing with the intensity and skill one has come to associate with them.

Opening the program was *Theme and Variations.* Also presented were the Pas de Deux from *Don Quichotte* and *Graduation Ball* (which every year becomes changed more and more). There are some charming new faces and figures in the company, and some of the youngsters should soon be taking more important roles. Of the familiar faces, aside from Kaye and Kriza, there were Lupe Serrano

(*Continued on page* 30)


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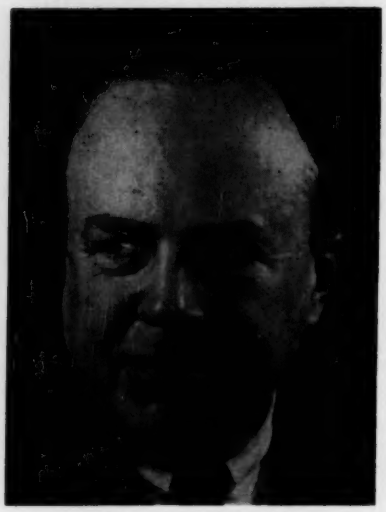
# BOOK REVIEWS

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

■ Olin Downes spent half a century as a music critic and, at his death in 1955, he was the dean of them all. He started in Boston in 1906 and came to *The New York Times* in 1924. His career spanned those of Henderson, Krehbiel, Finck, Huneker, Aldrich, Gilman, Straus, Peyser, and those other formidable intellects. Of them, he was easily the most powerful, and that despite the fact that he was not the scholar that Henderson or Straus (who retired before Downes' death and has been inactive for a few years) was, or the literary craftsman that Huneker and Thomson were.



*"dean of them all"*

But Downes had something none of those men had—an overwhelming passion that made every word come to life. Agree or disagree with him, he was a man of conviction and a man of stature. Virgil Thomson, reviewing this new book of Downes' critical writings, *Olin Downes on Music* (edited by Irene Downes; preface by Howard Taubman; Simon and Schuster, 473 pp., $5.00), said that Downes was the last of the American critics who really liked music. A pained squawk from some of today's critics resulted when those words appeared, but I think I know what Thomson meant. It was that Downes was the most dedicated critic of his generation, a critic who believed in the holiness of music and the dignity of criticism.

These reprints from the Boston *Post* and *The New York Times* make wonderful reading. If nothing else they are the evolution of a critic. The youth of 1906 was hesitant and clumsy. He had daring, all right, and conviction, but as yet no panache. That came later, and starting around 1925 we find a critic who is perfectly assured and who had evolved a literary style of his own.

Some words about Downes' literary style might be apposite. It was not a contemporary style. Downes was a courtly man and he wrote courtly prose that had its roots in the 19th century. But, despite what some people say, it was not a stuffy prose, and a very powerful personality came through. Downes, though he tried to make everybody believe he hated writing, was a natural writer. His trouble was not in getting his thoughts on paper; it was condensing them. He would come to his *Times* office after a review, ignore the night make-up man who was anxiously waiting for copy (deadline was 11:45 then, and Downes generally would wander in about 11:15 or so) and calmly start opening his mail. After some frenzied shrieks from the editor, he would roll some yellow legal paper into his machine and go to work.

The typewriter would smoke as Downes, pencil in mouth, batted out a thousand words or so. Then came the period of doubt and stress. He would try to condense. He would erase, write over the erasures, type over the writing. What resulted was not the cleanest copy in the world, but it was a genuine Downes review, written at white heat and blazing with conviction.

Most of the essays in this book are Sunday articles. We attend, with Downes, the major premieres and debuts of the last 50 years. We learn what he had to say about Debussy, Sibelius, Puccini, Horowitz, Menuhin, Toscanini. We get embroiled in an argument with Arnold Schoenberg (and Downes comes off much the better). We ponder with him the problems of music in our time. Downes was rather a conservative, but an intelligent one. He refused to be swept off his feet by any cliques; his was a fierce critical independence. What he looked for in music and criticism, more than anything else, was personality and belief.

"The trouble with most of our musical criticism," he wrote in 1945, "and our music, too, is its lukewarmness. Where is the precipitating issue? Where are the dynamic forces? What composer today is worth a desperate defense or opposition? As soon as one appears—as he will—there will be a resurgence of critical energy and uncompromising opinion—good fighting, not, pray God, on the battlefields but in the fruitful arenas of ideas, concepts, cultures. . . . When that day arrives, be assured that there will be stout-hearted and keen-penned critics who, on good occasion, will lose their tempers."

Altogether Downes was a formidable man—he with his lusty appetites, booming bass voice, extroversion, friendliness, intellectual vivacity and massive physique. He was big in every way. And yet he had, in print and in private conversation, a staggering humility. He also could be quick to anger, quick to forget. Much of all this comes through his writings. He made mistakes, as we all do; but he was never reluctant about admitting his mistakes. He knew a good deal about the technical side of music but his writing was almost always nontechnical, and few critics were more adept at giving the general flavor of a new work to the reading public. Basically his criticism was subjective and emotional. This he liked (and he gave the reasons why); this he did not like (and more reasons would follow).

The general public, from coast to coast adored him, and his word was law. The public, I think, sensed in Downes a music-lover who wrote because of love for music; who was not trying to impress people with his knowledge but was merely trying to tell them what he thought about a particular event. The modern musicians, although they respected Downes, had an ambivalent feeling about him, and some were downright venomous in their dislike for him. But one thing a critic learns early in his career: he can not satisfy everybody, and at bottom he writes basically for himself, not for any segment of an audience. Downes never worried about what anybody thought about him. He was doing the work he wanted to do, and he was doing it to the best of his ability. That was enough.

One thing Downes had above all: he never tired of music. Even in the last year of his life, after 50 years of listening to music, he would come into the office all aglow about the beauties of *Rigoletto,* or the Brahms First, or Beethoven's Seventh. There never was the least hint of anything blasé or tired in his listening habits. Would that all critics retained equal enthusiasm throughout their careers!

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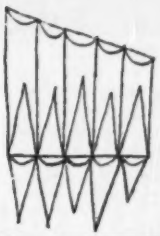
**THE DANCE**

(*Continued from page* 29)

and Scott Douglas. (Erik Bruhn, on temporary leave, was replaced by Oleg Tupine on this occasion.) Serrano has developed into a ballerina of the old school, one with a big line, extrovert gestures, and brilliant technique. Douglas is a *danseur noble,* one of the best before the public today. Then there were Ruth Ann Koesun, Michael Lland, Fernand Nault, Enrique Martinez, and Marlene Rizzo. It was like Old Home Week.

# Publishers' Mart



## GENERAL REVIEWS

**Frederick Werlé**

**New Instrumental Publications**

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Sonata in A Minor for Violin and Piano. Now in his 85th year, the Dean of British composers continues to add new works to an already large and impressive list. This recently published Sonata was given its first performance over the B.B.C. on Oct. 12, 1954—the composer's 82nd birthday. The work opens with a Fantasia, which at once identifies the composer's style. Then follows a Scherzo, and for the final movement, a Theme with Variations. It is a strong, impressive work, one bound to take its place among the standard violin and piano sonatas. Duration: 25 minutes. Published by **Oxford University Press.** Price: $4.65.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART: Ten Divertimenti. This is an excellent edition of some of Mozart's most pleasurable music in the lighter vein. The collection, edited by Gustav Nottebohm, is based on all available original manuscripts as well as old handwritten parts and early printed editions. This information is listed under the Editor's Comments on Manuscript Sources. A forward by Joseph Braunstein, of the Music Division of the New York Public Library, comments briefly on Mozart's contribution to *Geselschaftsmusik* (social music). This handsomely printed edition of Ars Musica Press is solely distributed for the United States and Canada by **Omega Music Corp.,** 19 W. 44 St., New York 36. Price: $6 (hard cover) and $4 (paper cover).

WILLIAM BERGSMA: "Tangents" for Piano Solo (in two volumes). This highly imaginative set of piano pieces contains some excellent writing. For the most part, the pieces are difficult, requiring a pianist with keen insight and sure technique. To fully understand the composer's intention, the following explanation appears on the first page: " 'Tangents' is like an old-time vaudeville show, in which an excerpt from high tragedy might be followed immediately by acrobats or a slapstick farce. The complete work is designed as a series of contrasts which balance into a good show." Beginning with a Fanfare, there follow two Prophecies (Zephaniah and Micah) and The Animal World—represented by Unicorns, Fishes, and Mr. Darwin's Serenade. The second volume contains Two Masques, Three Pieces for Nickie, and concludes with a Fanfare similar to the opening, but with some alterations. The entire work lasts approximately 33 minutes. Groups or individual pieces, however, may be performed separately. For the concert pianist or advanced student looking for a substantial American work, "Tangents" is worth investigating. Published by **Carl Fischer, Inc.** Price: $2 for each volume.

**Piano Teaching Collections**

TURK'S PIECES FOR PIANO STUDY, Selected and Edited by Oswald Jonas. This newly revised edition of Daniel Gottlob Turk's Piano Pieces for Beginners, first published in 1792, will undoubtedly be of great interest to the piano teacher. One of the foremost pedagogues of his day, Turk devoted much of his time to the music education of the young. The imaginative and sometimes very humorous titles of these 44 short pieces are an aid to the young student in his interpretation of the pieces. There are also several which are designed with some specific pedagogic point in mind, with such titles as "The Mordent," "Crossing Hands," "The Turn," etc. Robert Schumann was influenced by these little pieces, and they undoubtedly helped to inspire his own "Album for the Young." The first publication was so successful that a second and third edition had to be printed. The present edition is based in part on the first, and partly on the second edition. The editor has furnished a more complete fingering as well as indications for the execution of ornaments. This album is highly recommended for students in the earlier grades. Published by **Summy Publishing Co.,** Chicago. Price: $1.50.

PIANO LITERATURE of the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries. The **Summy Publishing Company** continues its series of the Frances Clark Library for Piano Students with Book 6-B, making a total thus far of eight volumes of smaller works in original form by the master composers of three centuries. This volume contains 21 compositions in a variety of styles and forms. At the end of each volume, the editor has included a glossary containing definitions of all the musical terms used in the music and in the biographical notes which precede the selections of each composer. There is also a valuable and scholarly explanation of the source of each composition with publication dates and many other interesting facts furnished by the editor, Louise Goss. This is one of the most carefully prepared collections of original piano music. Price of Book 6-B: $1.75.

## EASTER CHORAL MUSIC

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RESURRECTION MORN, Clarence Dickinson. The H. W. Gray Co., Inc. (Agents for Novello & Co., London), N. Y. $ .25

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FORTH HE CAME AT EASTER, Arr. David H. Williams. The H. W. Gray Co., Inc. (Agents for Novello & Co., London), N. Y. $ .16

A simple but effective Easter anthem arrangement of an old French folk tune, for 4-part (SATB) chorus, set to text by J. M. C. Crum (Oxford Book of Carols). Organ accomp. Vocal range and tessitura normal for all parts. 4 pages.

THIS IS THE DAY, Harold W. Friedell. The H. W. Gray Co., Inc. (Agents for Novello & Co., London), N. Y. $ .25

A lengthy, splendid Easter anthem for 4-part (SATB) mixed voices. Text by Leonard Young and also from the Scriptures. Organ accomp. The music is dignified, expressive and melodious, with an impressive incidental baritone solo. A dramatic "Alleluia" conclusion. A well-proportioned and intelligent choral body needed. Tessitura generally normal. 14 pages.

HALLELUJAH! JESUS LIVES, Ludvig M. Lindeman (1871). Clayton F. Summy Co., Chicago, Ill. $ .22

Margrethe Hokanson has made an unusually interesting arrangement of this composer's original Easter music, suitable for use by joint Senior (SATB) and Junior (SA) choirs. Text by Carl B. Grave (1825); trans. by Jane Barthwick (1862). Organ or piano accomp. Optional incidental soprano solo or to be sung in unison. Chordal throughout. 7 pages.

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